





# MIRACLES,

A RHAPSODY ;

BY E. BARTON.

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"Απιστοι δι' ἑμπειρίαν.

ARISTOT.

*Vix quidquam firmare ausim ; adeo diversa apud auctores  
reperiuntur.*

TACITUS.

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# THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHILOSOPHY

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MY DEAR ———,

I had intended to answer your inquiry, with respect to the late extraordinary cures ; but these intentions having somehow heated and caught fire, burst into the rhapsody which I now send you, in lieu of a response.

E. BARTON.

*September 22d, 1823.*



## A RHAPSODY,

&c. &c. &c.

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**WHAT** are Miracles?—Shall we describe them as stupendous manifestations of divine power, exhibited in works such as man can neither accomplish nor comprehend? Works so surpassing the utmost efforts, which we could make or can conceive, as even to turn comparison to mere folly and profaneness? Works, before which all of earthly origin is reduced to nothing; as Eternity annihilates the speck which we call Time?

If the above be a true description of miracles, —and perhaps it is—it follows, and must be confessed, that they abound: that they are strewn around us, thick as autumnal leaves in forest glades: that in miracles we may be said to live, and move, and have our being; and that the question is not where they *are*, but where they *are not* to be found.



The pendulous globe on which we sail through the immensities of space, while we seem to ourselves quite stationary, and mistake for "sound and firm-set Earth,"—for the very emblem of motionless stability,—that restless vehicle on which we are embarked, and which never intermits, though for a moment, its twofold revolution? The *Divini gloria Ruris*, \* which the surface of this earth expands, in exuberantly rich variety, for the delight of man? The starry firmament, which who can look at, without a pious and mysterious vibration of the soul? The planetary fleets, which, in countless numbers, navigate the same abyss in which we float; steering each its destined course, by its own pole-star-sun, secure from conflict with any other orb?—Are not these all miracles? Methinks they are.

The Heaven-provided clothing which decks the lilies of the field, and which that of Solomon, in all his glory, failed to rival;—the gradual and abstruse developement of acorn into oak;—the formation in the womb of a creature destined to eternal life; whose being has a commencement, but is never to have an end; whose "longings after immortality" proclaim it to be his lot; yet whose way to it lies incomprehensibly through mortality and death;—will it be said that there is nothing astonishing in all this?

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\* God made the country; and Man made the town.



Then what shall we say of Language? The miraculous clothing of still more miraculous Thought? The aerial body, which gives materiality to emanations of the soul; rendering them—not sensible indeed to sight or touch,—but may I say visible, or ought I rather to say palpable, to the ear? So impossible is it to consider language as of contrivance merely human, that the wise and learned all concur in holding it to have been a *direct* gift from the Creator; and which is enjoyed by the children of Adam, as a sort of hereditary inspiration.

Again, what shall we say of Flame? Surely not that it is not marvellous; or that we understand it! What is its essence? Its effluence, we know, is Light: the almost spiritual speed of which \* is only outstript, if it be outstript, by Thought. † If flame be the source of light, the prism tells us that it must be also that of colour; and give the flower its lovely tints, while it supplies the beam by which we view them. ‡ Withdrawing from the flower-knot, go pore upon the brook. Observe the living stream, that runs

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\* “Speed almost spiritual” is by Milton attributed to Light. It moves at the inconceivable rate of two hundred thousand miles a second.

† “While panting Time toils after *both* in vain.”

JOHNSON.

‡ “Blushing in bright diversities of Day;” as Pope has utifully, and I believe not unphilosophically, expressed it.

warbling and sparkling on. It is all sprightly activity, and animated motion. But take away its caloric; and dreary silence and cheerless torpor at once ensue. The lively chimer is no more. ψύχεται καὶ πήγνυται. It has died the watery death; and nothing now remains of it, but chill and stiffened ice.

Indeed the primary and constant property of this keen element,—its warmth,—is inseparably attendant on the vital principle; and intimately connected with it. The living scene has been aptly described as “the *warm* precincts of the cheerful *day* ;” for take away but heat and light, and what is there but universal death, in the cold and darkness that remain behind? Spite of what the appellations *spiritus* and *anima* \* might imply, it would seem, that as zoophytes connect the vegetable with the animal creation, so the pure and subtile quintessence of flame † may form the link between material and immaterial worlds. Allied to this idea,—which perhaps deserves to be called fanciful,—is the nature (as

\* "Ανεμος. Perhaps flame may be a modification of aerial substance. From Hebrews, ch. i. v. 7. one would not infer that *spirit* means any thing essentially different from *flame*.—Milton calls Angels “Celestial Ardours;” and in fact *Seraphim* are *Ardours*; from the Hebrew *Zaraph* to burn.

† Which in a state of comparative grossness (qu: condensation?) becomes subject to our sense.

conjectured) of the nervous fluid; the more than velocity, with which sensation shoots from the extremities to the brain; the effects produced by electricity upon the living nerve; and by galvanism, where the *vital spark* has been but recently *extinguished*. \* Unless I have forgotten the little chemistry that I ever knew, respiration is combustion; and when the animal has breathed, or burned, his last,

Sparisce poi, come ad un soffio il lume. †

No wonder that Man's instinctive propensity to religious adoration ‡ should have strayed, amongst the uninstructed, into the worshipping of fire. When we learn that "God maketh his angels spirits, and *his ministers a flame of fire*;" § when we are told, of the two angels who stood by Mary, that they were arrayed "in *shining garments*;" || and of the one who rolled back

\* I remember to have heard a lifeless turkey, on being galvanized, utter a distinctly audible sound. The thing came upon the *audience* so unexpectedly, that I could not say whether it was the peculiar cry of the animal; but probably it was; as this must depend partly on the structure of those vocal organs, which the galvanic fluid so strangely stimulated into action.

† Orlando Furioso.

‡ I suspect that there are spiritual, as well as corporeal instincts.

§. Hebr. c. i. v. 7.

|| Luke xxiv. 4.

the stone from the holy sepulchre, that “ his  
 “ countenance was like lightning, and his rai-  
 ment white as snow ;” \* — do we not hear some-  
 thing, which we are prompt, and as it were pre-  
 pared to believe? Is not this the way, in which  
 we should have expected (we knew not why)  
 that the ministers of heaven would appear ?

Then our almost sacred Poet,

“ He, that rode sublime  
 “ Upon the seraph-wings of ecstasy,  
 “ The secrets of the abyss to spy,” †

with what mysterious reverence does he treat of  
 the bright attribute of flame !

“ Hail, *holy* Light !  
 “ Of the Eternal, co-eternal beam,  
 “ May I express thee unblamed? since God is Light ;  
 “ And never but in unapproached light  
 “ Dwelt from eternity : dwelt then in thee ;  
 “ Bright effluence of bright Essence increate.” ‡

Other bodies are clogged and cumbered with  
 the property which we call *weight* : flame seems  
 to discard and liberate itself from any. § While  
 other bodies sink, it is on the contrary found

\* Matth. xxviii. 3.

† Gray, of Milton

‡ And see, for the way in which Life and Light are joined,  
 and taken reciprocally for each other, John i. 3. 4. viii. 12.  
 2. Tim. i. 10. Prov. vi. 23. Ps. xxxvi. 9. Rev. xxi. 23. 24.  
 Philipp. ii. 15. 16.

§ *Free* Caloric.



to rise. They gravitate, condense, and cling : it dilates, expands, and soars. It appears as if its centre of attraction lay in a direction opposite to that, to which matter generally tends ; and other substances press to earth, while it aspires to heaven. Lift the animated and elastic body ; and then try to raise the corpse. It is as heavy, as it is cold. The *vis inertię* remains unqualified : the antagonist principle is gone. How ? or whither ? It seems the most mystical and secret item in the material creation. While its rapidity escapes and mocks the tardy restraints of Time,\* its expansibility seems equally impatient of those of Space.† But I have said enough, perhaps more than enough, upon this subject.

From it to life, is perhaps no violent transition. What is Life ? The gift of God : that, by which

\* Its attendant, Light, has traversed a million of miles in about five seconds. Well might Milton call this

“ speed, to describe whose swiftness, number fails.”

Let the circle of persons who join to form a conductor of the electric spark be ever so numerous, it will take no time to go the round ; if *time* have any thing to say to succession, and to our perceptions. There will be no interval between the first and the last man’s experience of the shock.

† *Igneæ convexi vis et sine pondere cœli  
Emicuit ; summâque locum sibi legit in arce.*

OVID.

we will ; and move and act in pursuance of volition. I am not answered. This tells me whence it comes ; and some of what it can perform : but as to what it *is*, I am as much in the dark as I was before.

It is indeed the bounteous gift of God ; and considering the nature and attributes of *the life of Man*,† is perhaps that gift which most enables us to boast, that in the image of God were we created. But though it be because He lives, that we shall live also,§—yet we rather increase than remove the difficulty of conceiving what the vital principle in man can be, when we consider it as an effluence or emanation, from the true and perfect life of HIM,

Who *is* the eternal *hath been*, still to come : ||

of HIM, with whom the future and the past are but ingredients of the present ; while that present is as measureless as the eternity which it fills.

No : to extricate ourselves from the miraculous would be a vain endeavour.

“ All we behold is miracle : but seen

“ So duly, all is miracle in vain.”¶

† As contrasted with that of inferior animals.

§ St. John xiv. 19 ; and compare Gen. ii. 7.

|| *Anon*:—It is conceived that the Hebrew text in Exodus (iii. 14.) involves the meaning which the above line has attempted to develope. But to consider the *paraphrase* as justifiable, is not to object to the sublime version, “ I am that I am.”

¶ Cowper.



If we are to disbelieve every thing which we cannot understand, there will remain little, of which, with all our boasted reason, we must not doubt. We are hemmed in by the most inexplicable wonders. We cannot deny that such things have existence : there they are ; to confront and silence every doubt. But *how* they have been accomplished ; with what materials ; by what means ; where is the Newton that will tell us this ? The works of God are quite inscrutable, except so far as he has revealed them : we might as well attempt to execute, as to explain.

Why then are we not in a state of continual astonishment ? In the first place, it is preeminence \* that seems the object of admiration ; and where wonders are in throngs, the preeminence of each marvel is disputed by some other. Then custom tends to damp those emotions of surprise, of which the extraordinary † appears to be the appropriate food. We are not told to look for the *mirificum* in the *familiar*. Lastly, the indifference, with which we behold the wondrous works that swarm around us, may be connected with the callous corruptions of our fallen nature. In this apathy some latent impiety may lurk. Continually to wonder, would be continually to adore.

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\* And if the Preeminent be admirable, still more so is the Unique.

† That is to say, the *unusual*.

Yet the *nil admirari*, which forms a precept of philosophy, degenerates when it becomes the perverse practice of unbelief. The wonder which provokes worship, is a sober and a wholesome feeling; quite foreign from the ecstasies of a wildly enthusiastic exaltation. It is a mere "looking through nature up to nature's God." Indeed our admiration falls from its true scope, when it grovels upon earth; *cælumque tueri* is the duty and the right, as much of our mental as of our corporeal eye. The pyramids of Egypt, — the Coliseum of ancient Rome, — the sculpture and architecture of Greece, — the cartoons of Raphael, — the pealing harmonies of the organ, — the minster of York, or chapel of King's College, — the majestic effusions of Homeric Genius, — the far more sacred sublimities of him who called for inspiration, not from "the Aonian Mount," but from "the secret top of Sinai or Oreb," — the doctrines of Socrates, — the grandly expressed morality of Plato, — the keen and almost superhuman intuitions of our Newton, — these are excellent; these are justly entitled to admiration; these are all proximately the works of Man. But whose work is Man himself? Is not He who made the cause, the true producer of its effects? Or does my having an earthly father prevent my also having One who is in Heaven?

But to treat of human works is at once to digress and to descend. Let us resume our higher speculations.

The existence of Evil! is not this a miracle? But *physical* is the consequence of *moral evil*; and perhaps its cure. Be it so. Why should the malady, why should moral evil have existence? Is not the Divinity all-wise, all-powerful, all-good? Is not the existence of these qualities in the Supreme Being, in this perfection, a truth quite free from doubt? a truth too clear, to be even susceptible of proof? For proof implies the existence of that doubt, which it encounters, in order to remove. And is not this perfect Being the prime, paramount, eternal, and only cause? Why then, I repeat it, does Evil exist, to deform his works? Was He not omniscient, to foresee,—all-wise, to discern the means adequate to its prevention,—all-powerful, to apply these means with sure effect,—all-pure, to abhor evil with reference to himself,—all-benevolent, (God is Love,\*) preclusively to remove this abomination from his creatures? Then why again is Evil, with its attendant miseries, to be found?—I cannot tell.—But I *can* tell why I am provided with no answer to such a question. It is because I am a being of very limited capacity; and the answer lies beyond the boundaries of that discernment, which it has been the will of my Maker to bestow; and whose limits he has not, in this in-

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\* These very words form a text of Scripture; and are to be found in the Gospels; though where I cannot tell.

stance, enlarged by revelation. I know from scripture, I have learned from the sacred lips of my Redeemer, that there are many things concealed from intelligence surpassing mine; many things which even the Angels of Heaven do not know. But all the gifts of God, if not abused, are good. The ignorance is as valuable as the knowledge which He bestows. And what, for example, is the value of that ignorance which I have just confessed? It teaches me humility, and self-distrust. It obviates that pride, which precipitated me to what I am. It suggests, that the first and best use which I can make of Reason, is to convince myself of the narrowness of its bounds; and to learn and shun the dangerous fallacy of concluding, that nothing can be true, which I cannot comprehend.

Superstition is undoubtedly an evil; but Incredulity, in my opinion, is a worse. This, rather than the former, seems the evil of the day; and I would prefer throwing the weight of argument into the counteracting scale. Superstition appears to be a morbid excrescence, attaching mischievously upon, and deriving sustenance from what is good. It is allied to Ignorance; while *Humility*, Innocence and Devotion, are sometimes its companions. Incredulity is, on the contrary, connected intimately with our *Pride*; and is the core of much that is sinfully and perilously wrong. It is vain to hope that superstition will



not be the error of the lower classes ; as long as these are what they are likely to be always,—uninformed. There are faults which we may moderate, but must not expect that we shall extirpate ; and, for instance, cannot wholly rid the *Vulgus* of such as characterise the *Vulgar*. They “ whose talk is of oxen ” will have ideas, habits, and sentiments to correspond. But unbelief is the vice of a higher step in the social scale. It is the creature of that worldly knowledge which, involving no *fear of God*, is not *the beginning*, but the marring of *true wisdom* ; the growth of a depravity, to which the temptations that beset superior ranks conduce. It originates in a conceit, to which the humbler orders are less exposed ; a lowly class, by whose lot, if their virtues be circumscribed, we should remember that their vices also are confined.\* I am far from meaning to imply that the lower ranks should be held in the chains of ignorance ; or left to grope their way in utter darkness. The former ought, so far as may be practicable, to be stricken off ; and for their night, a soft evening twilight might be substituted with advantage ; which while it guided their course, and suited their destiny and occupations, would not dazzle them into error ;

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\* “ Their lot forbad : nor circumscribed alone  
Their growing virtues ; but their crimes confined.”

or be too much for their intellectual eye. Above all I would “take heed,” that the “substituted light should not be darkness.”\* The beams, with which I would endeavour to illuminate their confinement, should not emanate from the false lustre of that shallow pride, for which unfortunately we may not search in vain, among ranks that look down with contempt upon the vulgar; and pity them the more willingly, because with them to pity is to despise. This false lustre, which is no *new* light, (it is nearly as old as the creation, for it is as old as the sin of man,) has not only generated the spiritual arrogance, and bustling pharisaism that are abroad, but also much of the infidelity which still extensively prevails; and which is ever prompt and eager to confound faith with superstition. It is not amongst the lower ranks that we shall find Voltaire or Hume; nor amongst the higher, that we are to look for the followers chosen by our Lord. “Physician, heal thyself:”† you who would cure the community of their want of knowledge, begin by curing yourselves of your counterfeit wisdom and information. You who would instruct others, begin by educating yourselves.

Again I have digressed; and probably not for the last time. It is not I that lead my thoughts; it is my thoughts that are conducting me.

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\* Luke, xi. 35.

† Luke iv. 23.



These however return with me to say, that in order to meet the common acceptation of the term *miracle*, we must adopt a description different from any which I yet have given. Shall we call it an exertion of super-human power, producing something which interrupts or deviates from the ordinary course of nature?

In the first place, I trust it is not irreverent to doubt, whether, unless by reference to the godly purpose which they attained, such deviations might not be less admirable manifestations of Divine Power, than those uniform and daily wonders, which do not interrupt that general system, of which, on the contrary, they form a coherent part. But the interruption will be the more striking, *because* it is an interruption; and where the Divine object is to strike, will, in the same degree in which it is impressive, be suitable and useful. With the chain of wonders which has been let down from heaven, we are become so familiar, that we overlook its astonishing fabric and connexion: but let a link of it be unaccountably removed, and another substituted in its place, we know not how,—we consider this new link as a miracle; forgetting that the others may be equally entitled to the name.

To restore the blind to sight is a signal miracle, I avow. But He who wrought it, \* performed

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\* “I and my Father are one.” John x. 30. Compare John i. 1. 3. v. 18. xiv. 9. and x. 33.

a greater, when he made the eye; and first endowed it with that marvellous power of vision, which has been transmitted, with the organ, from our original parents to us all.

When God \* raised Lazarus from death, He performed a miracle, beyond doubt; and one of the most splendid, thrilling, and impressive kind. Yet surely not a greater, nor, if there be degrees in miracle, so great, as when his Almighty fiat called Adam into being. The one was to create: the other was but to restore. And what were the materials, with which God formed Man? He had provided them Himself; and proximately they were dust; originally they were—nothing!

Am I disparaging the miracle wrought by our blessed Lord, at the tomb of his slumbering friend?† God in his mercy put far from me so diabolical a thought! I am calling upon those who hear me, not to overlook the second miracle; but to open their eyes upon the first. I am but collating one act of Divinity with another. Our Father, which is in heaven, created Adam; and Lazarus was raised by Him, who, while he assures us that the Father and He are One, mysteriously adds, “My Father is greater than I.”‡ He who bid Lazarus “come forth,” and resume that life which he had possessed already, had called into

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\* See the last note.

† John xi. 11. 35, 36.

‡ John x. 30. xiv. 28.

existence, four thousand years before, that Adam who *was not*, until the creative word was given. For I firmly believe, with the apostle John, that by Him who “awakened” Lazarus, \* “all things were made; and without him was not any thing made, which is.” † In Him was life: ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν: with dust he shared it; and behold Adam! while to Lazarus his compassionate benevolence restored the heaven-derived inheritance, which had descended from his first parent. He bid Lazarus *re-vive*; but in the case of Adam He had said—Let there be Man; and there was Man!

Are there any who reject the Mosaic account of the Creation? To their own salvation this disbelief may be of sad concern; but to my reasoning it is of none. That the origin of man was a splendid miracle, is sufficient for my argument; and I may venture to defy the most obstinate unbeliever, either to deny the fact that man exists; or to suggest and substitute an origin for the human race, less miraculous than has been assigned them by Him “who taught the chosen seed. ‡”

Those who are for denying every miracle, because it is one, call in aid of their denial a somewhat gratuitous assertion; viz. that those in Scripture were wrought by our Redeemer, merely because of His Divine Nature, and in proof of his

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\* John xi. 11. † John i. 3. ὁ γενόμενος, which is.

‡ Paradise Lost.

equally Divine Mission. They forget that similar wonders were performed by mere men. I do not advert to those which were wrought by the Apostles; for these, it may be truly said, were so many evidences and vouchers of the authenticity of *their* mission; and heavenly truth of the gospel which they preached. But do we forget “the cruse of oil, that failed not,” in Sarepta, or Elijah’s raising of the widow’s son? \*—Nay there have been miracles, which though superhuman, were not divine: those, for instance, which the sorcerers of Pharaoh performed in Aaron’s sight. † Accordingly so little impressed, I had almost said surprised, were the unbelieving Jews, by the miracles of our Lord, that determined as they were to deny his being the Messiah, they yet did not, as a foundation for this denial, dispute his miraculous powers: but at one time referred them to the agency of Satan; at another seemed to pass them by, as little deserving of attention. Thus, for example, when he restored the withered hand, and enabled the paralytick at Bethesda to take up his bed and walk,—while the one miracle was not, and the other could not be denied, the perverse Jews saw nothing in either of these transactions, beyond an imaginary profanation of the Sabbath. ‡

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\* 1. Kings xvii. 16. 22.

† Exodus vii. 11. 12.

‡ John v. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 16. Luke xiii. 10 to 14. xiv. 1 to 6. xi. 15. vi. 6 to 10.



Neither does our Saviour rely solely, or even perhaps mainly, on his miracles, as the vouchers either of his Divinity or of his mission. These alone could not prove either : for miracles had already been performed by those, by whom no such character or capacity was claimed. When water gushed from the rock at Meribah, it was at the smiting of Moses, a mere man ; and who never claimed to be, but wrote of The Messiah.\*

It is chiefly by their connexion with the prophecies, that our Saviour's miracles conclusively demonstrated him to be the very Christ. They were precisely those which had been predicted ; and in his performance of them the Scripture was fulfilled. In Him was beheld face to face, what had been seen in some of the Prophets, as through a glass darkly ; and with a distinctness and animation truly astonishing in Isaiah. It is less perhaps to his miracles, than to his exact and perfect correspondence with the prophetic descriptions which had been given of him, that our Lord refers, in attestation of his Divine authority and nature. “ Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me ; for he wrote of me. Search the Scriptures : for they are they which testify of me. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”† In the last of these texts, our

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\* Numbers xx. 11, 13. John v. 46.

† John v. 46, 39 Luke xvi. 31.

Divine Instructor ascribes to the writings of Moses and the Prophets, a power of persuasion equal to that which miracles could possess; and seems covertly even to intimate, that those whom scriptural predictions had not convinced that he was the Messiah, would continue in their infidelity, notwithstanding his resurrection.\* And yet this miracle may perhaps deserve to be distinguished from the rest. This rebuilding, in three days, of that Temple which Infidelity had been permitted to destroy, we may acknowledge to have been one, which it belonged solely and exclusively to the Messiah to perform.†

But in one of the most cogent proofs of the true character of our Lord, there is nothing supernatural or unusual. The efficacy of the proof consists, and consists merely, in that nice and punctual fulfilment of prophecy, which it involves. When the soldiers, who attended the crucifixion, having shared some parts of his raiment, cast lots for the only garment that remained, because it would have been injured in the rending,—they did nothing uncommon, nor calculated to excite attention. We see in them and their proceedings, but unfeeling executioners, dividing amongst them the sufferer's spoils. But

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\* Such is the way, in which I understand this last text from St. Luke.

† John ii. 19, 21.



when, recurring to Isaiah,\* we find there a complete picture of what so long afterwards occurred; when we find the principal figure in that prophetic painting to be the yet unborn Messiah; when (towards negating every surmise of fabrication,) we recollect that those by whom the predictive record is vouched, and has been preserved, denied and still deny that he whom they crucified was Christ; (a signal miracle, which yet involves no interruption of the course of nature;) when we reflect on the scene laid for the fulfilment of this prediction; too public to admit a suspicion of forgery or invention,—even if the narrative did not bear upon it an ineffable stamp, and as it were idiom of unmingled truth;—when all these considerations are presented to our minds, we feel the resistless force of an occurrence merely common; and are compelled, by an event lying within the usual course of things, to exclaim with the centurion, “truly this *was* the Son of God.”—With so much reason did that Son refer still more to the prophecies, than to his miracles, in proof of what he was.

Fully indeed was he justified in referring also to his doctrines, in attestation of his Divine commission. So pure, so truly celestial is the mora-

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\* They parted my raiment among them; and for my vesture they did cast lots. See John xix. 24.

lity of the gospel, as to have induced at least one anti-christian writer (I mean Rousseau)\* while he rejected its miracles, to found on its moral precepts, a belief that our Redeemer was a divinely inspired Teacher. But to return.

What follows from what my last paragraphs contain? That miracles are now performing? No: but that those are ignorant or forgetful, and arguing on false foundations, who maintain that by none but Christ, nor for any purpose save that of establishing Christianity, has it been ever the will of Heaven that such wonders should be performed.

Some of those who have written on the subject of the late cures, insist on *dignity*, as a true criterion, for judging of the pretensions of whatever claims to be miraculous. † The position requires to be considered. Every miracle must be wrought, mediately or immediately, by God; and to no act of His, can the perfection of true dignity be wanting. But the saying of his Son, that “the first should be last,” is one of widely extensive application; and what seems dignity to Man, may often not be so with God. We should

\* Who, though the best of the French Infidels of his day, was one. His *Lettres de la montagne* are truly described by Gray, as “a weak attempt to separate the miracles from the morality of the Gospel.”

† Miracles mooted, p. 10.

therefore be presumptuous, in pronouncing that nothing can be of Divine extraction, which does not appear clothed with what is dignity in the eyes of man. When Christ restored the withered hand, or rid the leprous of their scales,—when, mixing his saliva with the dust, he compounded and applied an ointment to the darkened eye, which, when washed off in the pool of Siloam, should restore the patient's sight,—these miracles might not, in the manner of working them, or in their objects or effects, possess dignity enough to satisfy such fastidious criticks : \* and when in Cana, by changing water into wine, he supplied the deficiencies of the feast, and promoted the accommodation of the marriage guests, the act seems to have derived less dignity from its object, † than from the august Person, whose first wondrous work it was ; and while I believe in this miracle, with a firm conviction of its truth, and a reverence for it and every deed of Him by

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\* I should consider the *manner* of operating the cure upon this blind man to be particularly open to their presumptuous cavil ; as wanting in dignity ; and as an unnecessary process ; where the Lord had only to say to the darkened eye balls, “ recover sight.” But Faith humbly, justly, and *rationaly* concludes, that in *means*, as well as end, the work of God must be admirably fitting, wise, and good. Be but the premiss that a thing is His mere work,—and its adorable perfection is the sure and irrefragable conclusion.

† For as to its intrinsic character, it even was creative.

whom it was effected, my mind is not given to dwell on it as a distinguished item, in those proofs which convince me that the Son of Mary was the Son of God.

I fear that with these inflated searchers after grandeur, the exquisite formation of the insect tribes would scarcely escape from animadversion. To them, the dignity would be as nearly invisible as the animalcule ; and when they behold

“ the insect youth upon the wing,” \*

they would be likely to pronounce that “ Nature’s journeymen must have made them.” †

How differently has Cowper viewed the case !

\* GRAY.—In a Christmas exercise, which is endeared to me by the memory of its author, and which I had to recite at school, I will not say how many years ago, the Creator’s care of the inferior parts of his creation, is (with allusion to a known text of Scripture) thus tenderly recorded :

Consider, He whose bounty feeds us all,  
 Whose blessed birth this season doth recall,  
 Whose boundless mercy yielded up his breath,  
 To rescue Man from everlasting death,  
 Throned midst his angels, marks the sparrow’s wound,  
 Whose little bleeding bosom stains the ground.

Some preceding lines had (in favour of the little birds) recommended to the boys, in choosing their vacation sports,

To spurn th’ insidious crib, and wily snare.

† Shakspeare.



—I think with him ; though I could not express the thought as he has done.

How sweet, to muse upon his skill, display'd  
 (Infinite skill) in all that he has made !  
 To trace, in nature's most minute design,  
 The signature and stamp of power divine !  
 Contrivance intricate, express'd with ease,  
 Where unassisted sight no beauty sees ;  
 The shapely limb, and lubricated joint,  
 Within the small dimensions of a point ;  
 Muscle and nerve miraculously spun ;  
 His mighty work, who speaks, and it is done :  
 Th' Invisible in things scarce seen reveal'd,  
 To whom an atom is an ample field ! \*

If in my last paragraph I have digressed from miracles, yet the passage is short and easy from them to faith and prayer. Of the efficacy of both, I avow my conviction to be deep and strong ; and have the authority of Holy Writ, for indulging this persuasion. By these, the prophet Elijah raised the widow's son : by these the miracles of the Apostles were performed. The power of both is forcibly inculcated and illustrated by our Lord ; when he declares that by the former even mountains may be removed ; and proceeds to assure his disciples, that “ all things whatsoever, “ which they ask in prayer, believing, they shall

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\* RETIREMENT.—“ *miraculously spun* :” he seems to have entertained some notions, not dissimilar from those which may be found in the first paragraphs of this Rhapsody.

“ receive.” \* How available prayer may be, had already been shown by the Angel Gabriel to Zacharias ; † insomuch that we might aptly call the Baptist *the Son of Prayer*. In the case where the issue of blood was preternaturally healed, it might seem as if the cure was inadvertently performed, by an effluence of Divine virtue, elicited by firm Belief ; ‡ and our Saviour distinctly refers the miracle to the faith of the woman, as its source. § Of the efficacy of prayer, in his opinion, (which could not err,) we have an instance of a very singularly impressive kind. On the very eve of being betrayed,—when that was about to be accomplished, for which he knew and had so often declared that he came into the world,—we find him earnestly, fervently, and repeatably praying, in the mysterious agonies of his bloody sweat, to have that cup of bitterness put from him, which he afterwards drank with such meek heroism to its dregs. He knew, and said he knew, that *all* was possible to God : that while man might have but *one* way, the ways of God were *innumerable* (because infinite) for the accomplishment of his every purpose ; and consequently that if such were but the Divine will, He could, without frustrating the great scheme of Man’s redemption, allow this more-than-

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\* Matthew xxi. 21. 22.

† Luke i. 13.

‡ Luke viii. 44. 45. 46.

§ Ibid. v. 48.

dreadful cup to pass away. Accordingly he prayed; and with ardent confidence that his petition would be heard,—*unless* it were for the better that things should take their deadly course: “nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done!” not my *human* will; but thy Divine will; which is also *mine*; for I am in thee; and thou art in me.\*

In the Established Church we allow, in theory, the efficacy of prayer. I have often heard the reading of the litany introduced by a notification, that “our prayers were desired for different persons (generally naming them) who were afflicted with dangerous illness;” and one of the supplications, in that eloquent portion of our service, is offered on behalf of “all sick persons,” to the mercy-seat of God. To offer prayers which we thought nugatory, would be no better than profanation; and on the other hand, if our prayers produce the recovery of the sick, is not prayer the *means* and remedy, by which this recovery is effected? In other words, is not an *effect* incomprehensibly produced, by a *cause*, between which and the consequence thus arising, there is in the laws of Nature no connexion, which our experience can discern, or our reason can explain? The prayer, which I am supposing to be thus

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\* Luke xxii. 42, 44. Matthew xxvi. 38, 39, 42, 44. John xiv. 10, 11.

successful, is not that of the person ailing ; nor of any who are addressing it to Heaven in his presence. Consequently prayers, so offered, cannot have made his imagination the instrument of his cure.†—But he had known that they would be, and at the moment knew that they were, put up on his behalf. I answer, that we should be trifling most irreverently with Heaven, if we offered up our prayers before the throne of God, not in the hope that He would interpose, but that the imagination of our unhealthy neighbour might be stimulated into an action, which would operate favourably on his case. In my mind it would be less impious to have recourse to a delusion ; and persuade him that he was prayed for, when in reality he was not. As to prayer supplying the place of medicine, blister, the lancet, or the knife, (otherwise I mean than miraculously) this will not be contended,

In connexion with this subject, let me acknowledge an opinion, or something approaching to an opinion, which I have long entertained, that many events which are the result of God's compliance with humble prayer, are brought about without interruption of the ordinary current of affairs ; and appear (unless to the gratitude of pious Faith) to be fortuitous ; or arising from the

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† See page 9, of " An Attempt to explain, on natural principles, the late extraordinary cures."



mere application of human means. Often has it seemed to me, that powerful faith and earnest prayer (accompanied with a determined resignation to the Divine will) removed obstacles which appeared of impassably mountain-bulk ; while yet there was no apparent miracle interposed. And does it not seem more strikingly to evince the irresistibly *overruling* efficacy of celestial power, that against probability, and contrary to hope, our difficulties shall vanish, and our wishes be obtained, without any disturbance of the ordinary course of things ? This is part of that *particular providence* which I ascribe to God ; instead of the less constant, active, and energetic sway, which is attributed to Divinity by those, who hold that having once established a wise *general law*, he leaves Nature to work its unaided way, through good and evil, by this rule. Such is the doctrine of Pope and Bolingbroke ; but it is not mine. We find by experience, that we can seldom attain a general, without the sacrifice of perhaps many a particular good : that where extensive good is our object, we must admit partial evil amongst our means. On these grounds we allot to Deity an analogous course of operation ; forgetting that this is to assign to God the imperfection of infirm Man.—But to return to the place where I left off. We cry miracle ! if a deviation from the usual track of Nature precede, and seem connected with the accom-

plishment of our desires ; but we will not see the finger of God in this accomplishment, where no deviation, disturbance, or interruption has occurred. Yet, is there less evidence of transcendent power, involved in what appears *to have cost no exertion*, than in what, to human perception, might seem the result of some ? Interruption and disturbance of the ordinary course of nature—resemble effort, change, and counteraction. It would seem as if that ordinary course of nature would have generated, or had produced effects, which it required an alterative miracle, to obviate or repair. Thus miracle resembles correction ; and correction implies fault,—in a system which is divine ! But when a compliance with human prayer is made compatible with an adherence to the customary laws of nature, the Divine Majesty seems to me to be strikingly asserted and displayed.

I do not mean to say that God, in his supreme wisdom, may not sometimes see occasion (we know that he has done so) to take a different course. The *latent* miracles, of which I have been speaking, it is only the meek eye of Piety that can discern ; and there will be times and circumstances, when to force his interference on the notice of callous men, God will mark such interference, and make it visible and revealed ; by that unusual control of the generally established course of things,—that extraordinary and awfully undeni-

able interposition,—which constitutes miracle, in the common acceptation of that term.—And, by the way, where no imposture is intended; where there is none of that delusion to which only folly can give way; where persons rational and devout (but whose erring reason does not deny that there is a wonder-working power above us,) where such persons are honestly witnessing the circumstances of an uncommon cure,—I can scarcely believe that the Father of all truth would permit appearances to combine, in a way so misleading and illusive, as that what was merely human, ordinary, and routine, should assume the lustre of a miracle, to their soberly pious eyes.

But to return to what I was upon; I am imbued with an opinion that miracles are sometimes *latent*; and that they are not the less admirable on this account; nor evincing a less power, because this operates unseen. The Supreme Being himself is not the less Almighty, because he is invisible to us: because “not any man hath seen the Father; nor can any see God, and live.”\* In the case of those miracles which I term latent, the obstacles opposed by nature give way without being displaced. They are permeated by spirit, as a pellucid substance is penetrated by the rays of light; and the radiance of Divinity is not kept from us by their vain obstruction: to make his creature accessible to his mercy, it is not neces-

\* Exodus xxxiii. 20. John. vi. 46.

sary that the gross *material* of the world should be removed. When our Saviour appeared after his resurrection to his disciples, the doors, which had been closed, remained so still; but he stood in the midst of them notwithstanding. This was a miracle of another and a palpable description: for he was clothed with a material body; one which could be handled, in order to prove that he was no spirit; and to whose entrance, according to the ordinary rules of nature, the material of the doors must therefore have opposed resistance.\* But thus, in a way only *apparently* less miraculous, God, who is a Spirit, † is in the midst of us: while that which enhances the wonder, withdraws it from our observation; and the consequences of super-human influence seem the mere effects of worldly chance.

I have admitted that miracle, in its common sense, is an infringement of the law of Nature. This perhaps was a presumptuous and rash admission. Though the comet be eccentric, it has its orbit and its laws; and we must not, when we see it, deny that it is there,—merely because we do not know, forsooth, what brought it. What do *we* know of the law of Nature, beyond those few rudiments, which our little experience has picked up? Having become imperfectly acquainted with two or three letters of her alpha-

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\* Luke xxiv. 37. 38. 39.

† John iv. 24.



bet, we affect to have perused, and to understand her mighty volume. Besides, let us not talk in *figure*. What are the laws of Nature, but the laws of God? which He, who established them in perfect wisdom, cannot \* violate, deviate from, interrupt, or disannul. The miracles which He, mediately or immediately, performs, must form an harmonious part of his divine arrangement; though to our illusive experience they may seem to be conflicting with his laws. They startle us, like objects seen indistinctly in the dark; of whose presence, until we came upon them, we were unaware; and of whose true bearings, nature, and relations, we are nearly altogether un-informed.

As quench'd in shades, at first th' unpractised eye  
 Round its dim cell no guiding ray can spy;  
 But glimmering soon, a faint, uncertain light  
 Lifts the imperfect objects into sight:  
 Even then the shadowy mass, yet half unseen,  
 Wears to the startled view a threatening mien;  
 Till by degrees th' unfinished outline grows;  
 And thick contrasting glooms a form disclose:  
 The eye, each moment, some new shape descries;  
 Sees monstrous blots improve to symmetries;  
 And used to husband thus it's scanty ray,  
 Shrinks dazzled from the bright approach of day.†

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\* Which, in the case of the Deity, is equivalent to, and must mean *will not*.

† ANON. The concluding lines may be little to my purpose; but if I had not given them, the termination of the extract would have been abrupt.

Poor groppers that we are ! surely the greatest of miracles is one at which we never wonder ; God's endurance of our blindness, sinfulness, and arrogant presumption.—We suppose too that miracles contradict our reason ; when the fact is that they but clash with, and baffle our experience ; and the fallacy with which our vanity beguiles us, is the notion that this experience must have taught us every thing that was to be learned. Dismiss this vain conceit, and how can miracle *per se* revolt our reason ? What does it demonstrate, but the omnipotence of God, and the ignorance of man ? Now can we doubt the first, or ought we to deny the second ? The use that Socrates made of Reason, was to ascertain the narrowness of its bounds ; and the chief knowledge which he claimed to have acquired was—that he knew nothing,

The efficacy of prayer is the topick, on which I have last enlarged ; and from which I may have occasionally strayed. The following short account is connected with it ; and relates to one, whom (as the saying is) I know as well as I know myself. For the truth of its facts, I need not hesitate to pledge my word. For the justness of its conclusions I would not undertake to answer ; or engage them the mere dictates of sober reason and experience ; without any lurking tinge of enthusiasm or superstition. In all transactions and affairs of life, the hero of my little tale is as dis-

creet and rational as I am ; or as people are usually found to be. Yet his reasoning faculty may not be free from those weak points, from which human intellect can seldom claim exemption.— He states that he was brought up in sentiments and habits of religion ; to which he hopes (allowance made for our infirmity) he has adhered. But while he was a young man, and even after he had ceased to be a very young one, he used occasionally to forget, or neglect his daily prayers. After some time however, he conceived himself to observe, that, on the days of such omission, something untoward, and more or less disastrous, was certain to occur. There was always, of course, an adequate cause for the misfortune. If his carriage was upset, it was not in broad day-light, upon a level road ; if he fell from his horse, it was when the animal stumbled, or made a start ; if he flung his bank notes into the fire, it was because he had mistaken them for a different parcel ; if he received information of a friend's decease, it was because the friend had died, and that it was in course for the intelligence to reach him on that day. Accordingly it was a reiteration of coincidence, recurring uniformly in the course of years, which finally almost compelled him to conjecture that there was more than *mere* coincidence in the case ; and that, parallel to the obvious chain of causes and effects, there lurked an imperceptible and more mysterious one, which linked each

disaster with the omission of the day. If the days of forgetfulness had outnumbered those of prayer, (but the fact was widely the reverse,) he would have accounted for the phenomenon, by recollecting that misfortune fell where there were most open days to fall upon; that this was agreeable to the ordinary rules of chance; and that events had been but running according to the odds. Again, if he had been recalling his own forgetfulness with compunction, he might suppose that he encountered the incidents of the day, with certain credulous propensities and prepossessions; and thus noted misfortunes, not in truth exceeding those, which had passed him by unnoticed, on the days of prayer. But on the contrary it was uniformly the disaster, which suggested an omission, that had till then escaped him; and which seemed to him to whisper, "you have not prayed to day." Above all, it appeared to him, that on the days of such neglect, he was sure to be led into some temptation; and to commit some sin.—The consequence, which might have been expected, has arisen: he never omits his daily worship now.—For the rest, though he has not therefore ceased to encounter "the changes and chances of this mortal life," the tide of his affairs flows equably and smoothly. But besides, as the observations which I have related taught him constant prayer; the fruits of this latter, in its turn, have been his learning that worldly pros-



perity and success are not the perishable reward, which Devotion ought to ask for; or may hope to reap.—Such is my little tale. It will be for the reader to pronounce, whether it be as unprofitable, as he may think it flat.

A tract is just now published, entitled “an exposure of the late impostures.” The author seems a man of talent: but though I may share in some degree his doubts, I build *my* portion of uncertainty upon different grounds, from those on which he has erected *his*. But *his* indeed is more than mere distrust. It is vituperative, abusive, scornful, and utter disbelief; and I cannot but disapprove of the contemptuousness of his language, and general insult of his tone. An advocate of the reformed religion should remember, that Henry the eighth did not confound the doctrines of Martin Luther, by opprobriously describing him as “an imp of hell.”\* As for the arguments put forward by the author of this “exposure,” they sometimes *glitter*, and may be really of *gold*. But if those arguments be always sterling, the scales of my judgment are not exact. The writer says he is “a *rational* Christian†; and I will not dispute his being a *sincere* one: but I doubt his having deeply considered the funda-

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\* In the Royal Treatise, which obtained for Henry the title of Defender of the Faith. Luther is there repeatedly called “this imp of hell.”

† This is the signature subscribed to this spirited tract.

mentals of his creed. His peremptory and reiterated demand of glaring and overwhelming proof, before he will admit miraculous pretension, too much resembles the well-known Jewish requisition ; “ let him come down from the cross, and “ we will believe.”\*

Several pages of the pamphlet are occupied in proving that Mrs. Stuart’s sworn report of her own case would not lead us to conclude that she had been bred a physician ; and to the benefit of any argument which may be founded upon this, the author seems to have entitled himself fully. But when he observes (I believe this is on Miss Lalor’s case) that we do not know that she is cured ; nor can be certain of this, unless she shall have talked on to her last breath ; I am not prepared to assent to the conclusiveness of the observation. It seems much too loose a paraphrase of Solon’s apothegm, addressed to Cræsus ; that to pronounce a man happy, until his death, was to give a premature opinion.† Even physicians ought, methinks, to protest against this doctrine, that every subsequent relapse disproves a previous cure. But, to be more suitably serious on the subject ; what shall we say to the case of her, whose issue of blood was staunched ? She must have afterwards died of something : and

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\* Matthew, xxvii. 40. 42.

† Τὸ τῷ Σολωνος, ‘μηδένα τῶν ζώντων ἕλεσι.’ Herod. Clio 86.

would the cure performed upon her have been less miraculous or less certain, if this something had been a return of that complaint, which, with the assistance of her faith, had been so marvelously removed? Or would it be less absurd than it would be shockingly profane, to deny that Lazarus was raised from death, because he must afterwards have died? \*

The Author tenders certain miracle-tests to our acceptance; by which we shall be able to distinguish between true and false. The object of a miracle, he tells us, ought to be very *grand*, and very *plain*; and if those who promulge the wonder, shall qualify their explanation of it with a "*perhaps*," there is no more to be said in its behalf: it is a manifest imposture. The exposition which would authenticate a miracle must be as distinct, as the declarations of the future, by the prophets, were of old.

Thus, as to the 'dignity' which must enter into the composition of every genuine miracle, this writer agrees with another who has entered the polemic lists; † and to what I have said upon the subject, in noticing *his* tract, there is little left for me to add.

The miracle of withering the barren fig tree by a curse does not seem, in its cause or ob-

\* *Complete exposure*, p. 72. 73.

† The Author of *Miracles mooted*.

ject, to be very *plain* : \* nor is it rendered more apparent, either by our recollecting that a tree is not a responsible being, capable of distinguishing between right and wrong ; nor again, by a comparison of its fate with certain texts which are to be found in the gospel of St. Luke. † Accordingly, to my interpretation of this miracle I must tack the appendage of a “ perhaps.” I can offer but a very hesitating and merely conjectural explanation ; and towards giving this, I would connect it with what follows ; ‡ and consider it as introductory of our Lord’s emphatic recommendation of a virtue, which the tract before me does not seem calculated to promote. Lastly as to lustre, I see little in this miracle ; except what is derived from the radiance of His glory who performed it.

The suffering the Satanic Legion to enter into the herd of swine ; and the effect which followed ! § Is the grandeur of this act striking ? or its object quite apparent ?

Again ; it does not seem to me that our Saviour *always* performed his miracles, (of which by far the most numerous were healings of the sick,) with those views which this tract appears exclusively to assign them ; viz. in order to vouch his

\* Matthew xxi. 18. 19.

† ix. 54. 55. 56.

‡ Matthew xxi. 20. 21.

§ Luke viii. 30. to 33.



authority, or enforce his doctrine ; or (perhaps I might say) on any general plan. His restoration of the widow's son to life is, for example, expressly referred to his compassion of her sorrow. \*

But to return to the point which was before us ; if my last paragraph has digressed.—If such acts of our Saviour as were miraculous, ought all to admit of prompt and certain explanation, equally so, I presume, ought those in which no miracle was involved. How then shall we interpret his washing the feet of his disciples?—The thing is quite apparent : it was a lesson of humility that he was teaching.—Nay, we have the direct authority of our Lord, for saying that this act of his was mysterious in its nature ; and such as will not admit of easy and cursory explanation. Peter's refusal to suffer his feet to be washed by his Lord and Master, breathed a spirit of due humility already. This therefore was not the lesson which he required. But what is our Saviour's reply to his objection? “ If I wash thee not, “ thou hast no part with me : *what I do, thou “ knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereaf- “ ter.*” † Here, in express terms, a mystery is announced ; and it is as explicitly declared

\* Luke vii. 12 to 15. At the grave of Lazarus he evinced the divine tenderness of his heart. John xi. 35, 36.

† John xiii. 7. 8.

that of the act then done, the object was one, which it would be vain for Peter *then* to attempt explaining.\*

But the distinctness attributed to prophetic declarations † is, I confess, what surprises me most of all. It was on the contrary a part of the divine plan, that they should be obscure. That what they meant, *should not then be known; but should be known thereafter.* That the fulfilment of the prediction should at length dissipate those clouds, which, until it was accomplished, were thrown mysteriously around it. Prophets frequently announced more than they were prescient of, themselves. Their words had a meaning, of which they were not conscious. While they supposed themselves to be discussing one thing, they were (under the ascendant of inspiration) inadvertently treating of another. Even in cases where they had a foresight accurately defined; and felt that, “rapt into future times,” ‡ they were proclaiming what should be hereafter; yet their words had a further meaning, of which the utterer was unconscious; and were destined to a second and more complete accomplishment, in addition to that which the seer expected; and

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\* Compare pages 62. 67. 69. &c. of the Tract entitled *complete exposure &c.*

† By the Author of *a complete exposure*, p. 67.

‡ *Pope*, of the prophet Isaiah.

which they were also preliminarily to receive. Some sayings of Isaiah issued wonderfully distinct and definite from his mouth: but the astonishing clearness, which his prophetic effusions *now* display, is derived from the strong light that has been thrown upon them by the gospels. These and subsequent events have served to unravel that confusion, in which for the wisest purposes his predictions were involved. Such as read this prophet cannot overlook a certain perplexity, in part attributable to his blending Christ's humility with his glory; and intermingling the periods of his first and second coming.

But in support of the hypothesis, that prophecy may be inadvertent, and he who utters it be quite unconscious of what he does,—I can cite the direct authority of Scripture. It is distinctly stated in the gospels, that Caiaphas being high priest (and because he was so) *inadvertently* prophesied of the death of Christ; and foretold the merciful object, which by dying he would achieve. \*

But to descend from “this great argument,”† to matter of less grave import. After deducting (as a mere appendage of enlivening ornament) pages of expostulatory invective and indignant exclamation, what remains of the Exposer's letter to Doctor Murray, may be classed under the

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\* John xi. 49 to 52.

† Paradise lost.

heads of syllogism and question. It is a blending of the *methodus Socratica* and *Aristotelica disputandi*. But Socrates asked no questions, the answer to which would but confute him: nor again, ought any man to syllogize in haste. I will leave it to Lord Norbury, whether *festino* be not a dangerous figure: and we know from Cicero, that logical argument resembles a closed fist.\* Now this weapon none should use, who cannot plant a vigorous blow. They should recollect that the adversary may also shut *his* intellect to fist. This however I shall not attempt to do. I do not claim to be an adept in mental pugilism of the sort; nor is it, if I were, my desire to give hard knocks. My opponent seems a person of ability; and may be a very well disposed and worthy man; though he have connected himself with a termagant and ill-natured sort of muse.† If he did not write angrily, and hastily, I make little doubt that he would write well.

Having truly observed, that we cannot tell “*how* the will enforces its commands upon the muscles; or *how* the nerves convey intelligence

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\* Oratory he compares to the manœuvres of an open hand; giving both similitudes on the authority of some Greek writer. I forget where the passage is. Probably in *De Oratore*. Cesare, Camestres, *Festino*, Baroko, will be found in Murray's (not Archbishop Murray's) *Logick*.

† “The best good man, with the worst natured muse.”



to the brain ;”\* he proceeds to imply that these enforcements and communications are not miraculous ; and to conclude that we cannot, on the mere ground of our not knowing how it was effected, admit the cure of Miss Lalor to have been a preternatural event.

In the first place *negatur minor*. The power of volition over muscle, and intercourse of nerve with soul, *are* entitled to be deemed miraculous ; though seen so continually, they be “miracle in vain.”—But I will, with a *protestando*, admit this premiss for the sake of argument ; having satisfied my conscience, by denying it on behalf of truth.

Still, *negatur necessitas consequentiæ* ; as I used to say when I was disputing for my degree. It is not demonstrated (and the contrary may be shown) that the *unaccountable* cure of Mary Lalor is a case, at all analogous to the *unaccountable* influence, exerted over our muscles by our minds. Therefore, though the *minor* proposition be admitted, still the foundations, on the side of the *major*, will give way ; and the unsupported conclusion tumble to the ground.

How does the analogy fail ? In the way that I shall now describe. Our uniform experience tells us, and forces us to believe, that mind operates upon muscle. Therefore though we do not

understand the *how*, we cannot deny the reality of this operation ; without distrusting our senses, *and turnning the back on our experience.*

But again, our uniform experience instructs us further, that there are certain violent distempers, and grievous infirmities of our nature, (of which a want of the faculty of speech is one,) which are not found, in the ordinary course of nature, to take their departure on the sudden ; and without the application of human means for their removal.

Therefore, as we should contradict our constant experience, by denying the influence of volition upon muscle ; we should equally contradict it by maintaining, that Miss Lalor's dumbness made its sudden and capricious exit in this way.\*

But the Exposer expects to be swallowed in a miraculous Charybdis. Accordingly, in a panic, he sets all his sails ; and makes for the opposite shore with the most inconsiderate precipitation. What if I show him that he may go to pieces, on a miracle more monstrous than that which he would avoid !

Was Mary Lalor's cure *produced by—nothing ? Operation without operator,—relative without correlative,—an effect without a cause !* Such *positive relatives* would seem to me to be a much miscalled, a very incongruous, and most incomprehensible sort of things. They strike me to be a tho-

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\* It was an infirmity of above six years standing.

roughly miraculous modification of existence ; and when, embodied into solecisms, they make their appearance in description, to constitute that verbal miracle, which we term *nonsense*.

The argument which I am examining (whatever other of the Exposer's arguments may do) assuming that *how* Miss Lalor's recovery was effected is unknown, admits that in fact she was prayed for, and was cured : an admission which rids us at once of all inquiry, as to the evidence by which the last mentioned of these facts is proved. \*

Prince Hohenlohe then prayed for her ; and at or nearly about the time when he did so, she was instantaneously restored.

When one event immediately follows upon another, and ensues on no discoverable cause, unless this other have produced it, we presume *it* to be *effect*, and *this other* to be *cause* ; and presumption unrebuted is held equivalent to conclusive proof : a maxim so far from being merely theoretick, so far from not being frequently reduced to practice, that many an inheritance has passed away, many a life has become forfeit, and the forfeiture been paid, by means of the application of this well known rule.

What follows immediately *thereupon*, we accordingly, in such cases, presume to ensue *there-*

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\* Complete Exposure, p. 48. 49. 78.

*fore* ; and we abide by this *presumption*, until the contrary be shown.

But no : the supplication and the cure were mere coincidence ; nothing more : for we cannot trace between them a connexion, which should establish the relations of effect and cause.

But can we trace any connexion between mental volition and corporeal motion ? between my choosing to take a walk, and the muscular action which ensues ? And shall we therefore negative the relations of cause and effect here ? Shall we pronounce that the walking and the will are matters of fortuitous coincidence, or else arise from the mere urbanity or good nature of our legs, obligingly seconding our wishes, but not “ upon compulsion ? ”

A recovery unproduced,—an effect destitute of cause,—is this a miracle ?

Nothing can come of nothing : speak again.†

Suppose then an unknown cause : is it, or is it not a wonder, that the recovery should be a phenomenon conflicting with all our past experience, yet that the natural cause of what so conflicted should wholly elude our observation ? Is it a greater miracle, that it should be the consequence of faith and prayer ? That prayer “ avail-

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† LEAR.



eth much ;” that faith has made the distempered whole ; these are positions which we at least profess to believe : but a seemingly causeless, an *utterly* unaccountable restoration of the health,—one produced by no imaginary means, human or divine, but which, like the coffin of the false prophet, is suspended between earth and heaven, without contact or connexion with the one or with the other,—here indeed we are warranted in being ἀπιστοὶ δι’ ἐμπειρίαν :\* for in the incredulity which experience causes, our reason will concur.

Have I proved that Mary Lalor’s was a miraculous restoration ? On the contrary, I have not even asserted my conviction that it was so. I have given no opinion on the allegation that it was.† I have been merely weighing a certain argument, which has been adduced against it.

And so I have done with the “ Exposure of the late Impostures ;” for so, without ceremony or circumlocution, its author has denominated the transactions of which he treats. To those arguments which impute no fraud, he was well warranted in resorting ; and in communicating such of them to the world, as had proved convincing to himself. But *mala fides* is no trifling accusation ;

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\* Incredulous through experience. — ARISTOT.

† I have on the contrary acknowledged my doubts and hesitations. See p. 37.

and if it were allowable to make the charge at all, it should have been suggested as compatibly with decency, as circumstances might permit. The writer ought not to address Dr. Murray in a tone of the most affronting jeer. Policy and prudence joined good manners, in forbidding this. Still less ought he, in language as explicit as insulting, to attribute to clergymen of fair character and reputation, to prelates of a Christian Church subordinatedly established amongst us, that they were accomplices in an imposture, gross, scandalous, and profane.\* Some passages too, on other grounds, revolt me very much.† I am persuaded they slipped hastily and inadvertently from a writer, whose pious and good intentions I am not disposed to question. It shocks good taste, almost as much as it confounds religious feeling, to find the name of the Creator *in any way* in contact with that of “a juggler, shewing signs and wonders, for the amusement of his audience.” Again, I am surprised at such forms of expression as the following. “*I am free to confess* that, in my opinion, Hume (on miracles) has been satisfactorily answered!” What is this, but to be *free to confess* that he is a Christian? The writer has magnanimously screwed his courage to the sticking place; and will make an acknowledgment

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\* See page 84; and indeed almost every page in the pamphlet.

† See pages 55, 56, and 77.

which may expose him to derision! I, for my part, am free to confess a great deal more than he has done: viz. that I hold Hume's over-rated essay to be a trash of very flimsy impiety and profaneness; far more easily susceptible, than well deserving of, an answer.

Lastly, the Exposer ought not sacrilegiously to break and enter the very sanctuaries of our Religion, in order to defend it. The motive is meritorious; the sacrilege is unwitting; but the proceeding is reprehensible and perilous in the extreme.

“ To prove a miraculous suspension of the laws of nature, *the very highest possible degree of proof must be given.* No mere hearsay of *one or two persons*, no feeble evidence by an individual, or *a small number*,—by no such evidence as this, can a miracle be proved.”\*

I will not here inquire why, if his miracles were performed in order that by being divulged they might attest his sacred mission, our Saviour so often charged the objects of these miracles to tell no one. Instead of dwelling upon this, I will ask the writer does he believe in the transfiguration of our Lord? Our belief of the fact must rest on the testimony of “ *a small number* ;” for there were but three persons on the mountain,

where this wonderful event occurred ; nor would the caviller fail to remark that “ these kept it close ; and for a long time told no man any of the things which they had seen.”\* The transfiguration was a miracle of the most effulgent kind : an irresistibly convincing attestation of Christ’s mission.† Why then was it not exhibited to many ? This, it may be said, might have impeded that deadly catastrophe, which was necessary for the salvation of mankind. But *after* our Lord had suffered, and had risen, why was he only seen by his own disciples, and (comparatively) a few ? Why did he not appear to Caiaphas,—in the synagogues,—in the temple ? Why did many bodies of the saints which slept, arise after his resurrection, and come out of their graves, and appear to many ?‡ Was this in order to supply vague and far less cogent evidence of that, of which his own public appearance would have been conclusive demonstration ?§

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\* Luke ix. 28. to 36.

† See v. 35 of Luke ix.

‡ Matthew xxvii. 52. 53.

§ It would seem as if some conceived that Christ could work miracles, only while he was a dweller upon earth. Are we to have less faith in his power now, that he has risen and ascended ? From his own hallowed lips we on the contrary learn, that by his going hence, his power of conferring benefits on his followers was increased. John xiv. 2. xvi. 7. Acts ii. 33.



Vain, presumptuous creatures that we are! we ought to shrink from irreverent inquiry into “the secret things which belong to God.” But this our inflated arrogance will not permit; and there are amongst us those, who will not believe that any thing which is not pompous and terrific, can be divine. To the “wind that rends the mountain,” to the “earthquake,” and roaring “fire,” Human Pride *may* be prevailed on to hearken with respect: but to the faithful ear of genuine Devotion, it is the “still, small voice,” that rings continually of Heaven.\*

But again, let us descend from contemplations so much above us; and betake ourselves to matters which are more within our reach.

A disinclination to believe any thing uncommon, I take to have its source, less frequently in enlightened reason, than in narrowness of intellect, coldness of heart, bad taste, and self-conceit. Bad Taste turns with dislike from that, which, being extraordinary, cannot be what it would better relish,—vulgar. The cold meagre and ungenerous spirit cannot give, to the calm of reason, the energetic aid of feeling: the torpid heart has no expansive warmth, with which to dilate the intellect; and as it were enlarge its bounds. In the mean while, that which is *borné* (and vain of being so) cannot at the same time be

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\* 1 Kings, xix. 11, 12.

comprehensive; nor will the conceit, which is in caressing attendance on little minds, allow them to catch the most transient glimpse of their own smallness; or to admit that any thing lies beyond their miniature horizon. I make no doubt that in the fifteenth century, the wiseacres of Castile and Arragon derided the strange out-of-the-way imaginations of Columbus; admired the silliness, which could ask the West to convoy it to the East; and assured their friends, with sagacious and predictive simpers, that as his projects were plainly visionary, they would be proportionably unsuccessful. If those sages had been untravelled natives of Sumatra, how they would have reprobated the falsehood, or despised the folly, of those who gossipped to them about ice and snow! what *congelation confuted* pamphlets would have been published there, to match the *miracles mooted* of our more northern clime!\*

Prodigies there be, which I can surrender to the derision of the Antimiraclists, without compunction. When *Dunstan* discovers that the fair young damsel, who visited his cell, was but *Le Diable amoureux*, † (or pretending to be smitten,) and laying hold, with red-hot pincers, of the intruder's nose, makes him bellow until the whole neighbourhood resounds, ‡—a horse-laugh seems

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\* Hume's Essays, vol. 2. note i.

† I once read a whimsical French novel, with this title.

‡ Hume's (and every other) History of England.

the only echo, which this bellowing deserves. All one can doubt, is whether a *bonâ fide* female was not the victim of this fiery pinch: all one can wonder at is, that if the visiter were Beelzebub himself, the glowing pincers should have extorted such potent yells, from one so accustomed to a warm climate; and who had (as we know from Milton) so often trod "the burning marle."

Again, I yield up (though with some pity and half reluctance) to their scorn, Doctor Dee's "poor little maiden, *Madine*, the spirituall creature that seemed to issue suddenly from his oratory, like a pretty girle of seven or nine yeares of age, attired on her head with her hair rowled up before, and hanging down very long behind, with a gown of sey, changeable green and red, \* and with a train she seemed to play up and down like, and seemed to go in and out behind the books lying on heaps, that seemed to give place while she passed between them;" &c. &c. &c. †

But there is a marvellous, which is short of the preternatural. In general the boundary between them is distinctly marked; and we feel it, even where it is not easily discerned or described. I

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\* Pity it was not orange.

† A true relation of Doctor Dee's actions with spirits. The Doctor lived in the reign of Elizabeth; and, if he survived her, had a fine time of it, I suppose, in that of James the First.

will not give, as an example, the adventure of Thrasyllus; whom, (half disposed to hurl him down a precipice into the sea,) Tiberius, to put his knowledge of futurity to the test, required to draw out his own horoscope; and examine the promises which it made. *Ille, positus siderum ac spatia dimensus, hæere primò, dein pavescere; et quantum introspiceret, magis ac magis trepidus, postremo exclamat 'ambiguum sibi ac prope ultimum discrimen instare.'* Tum complexus eum Tiberius, '*præscium periculorum, et incolumem fore*' gratatur.\* Neither will I cite Dryden's astrological predictions about his sons. These are frontier and dubious cases; and being so, I exclude them. On the mysteries of *second sight* I am for the same reason silent: though the existence of this faculty be accredited, "by the opinion held of it for centuries, by a whole nation;" † though it be still maintained by many; and has received at least a half support from Doctor Johnson. ‡ There is also another marvel, too mysterious for admission into the class which I am upon. I mean that strange impression, which

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\* Tacitus, Annal. lib. vi. c. 21.—*positus* the positions.—Suetonius also, in his life of Tiberius, c. 14, notices the danger in which Thrasyllus was; and from a note it appears, that the incident related by Tacitus is also to be found in Dio, and Zonar. Ann.—The thing occurred at Rhodes.

† Johnson's Works, vol. viii. p. 343.

‡ Ibid. p. 343. to 347. Journey to the Western Islands.



will occasionally come with unexpected suddenness upon the mind, that the scene now passing, and in which we share, is one, which in the very place, and very words, with the same persons, and the same feelings, we had accurately rehearsed, we know not when before. It is the oddest of sensations ; and one which will occur, where, in what is going forward, there is nothing remarkable, or of particular interest involved. While we speak, our former words seem ringing in our ears ; and the sentences which we form, to be faint echos of a conversation had i' the olden time. Our conscious thoughts too, as they rise, seem to whisper to each other, that this is not their first appearance in this place. In short, all that is now before us seems the apparition of a dialogue long departed ; the spectral resurrection of scenes and transactions long gone by. Or we may be said, by the gleam of a momentary flash of reminiscence, to be reviewing in a mysterious mirror, the dark reflection of times past ; and living over in minute and shadowy detail, a duplicate of the incidents of some preexistent state.\*

Lastly I say nothing of the parrot of Prince Maurice ; whose words were symbolical of his

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\* The Author of Waverley has cursorily noticed this extraordinary pseudo-sensation, in one (but I forget which) of his latter productions. I have therefore his authority, and probably that of my reader's experience, for its existence.

thoughts; and who accordingly could not only speak, but keep up a conversation: asking and answering questions; delivering opinions; and asserting his own qualifications for a certain trust. Yet in this wonder, the sagacious and cautiously inquiring Mr. Locke appears to have believed.\* —As for Pontoppidan's "Behemoth biggest born," the Kraken,† I have no room for such a monster in the pages of this small tract. I will therefore merely say, that the narrator was a Bishop; and that perhaps one of the objections to his credit has been built upon his belief in the existence of the Mermaid; an animal now, I believe, admitted to exist.‡

But as, like a true Irishman, I have been stating what I was omitting, I will, to avoid prolixity, now give but a single specimen of the marvellous to which I intended to advert, when Rhodes, the Highlands, and a train of etceteras came athwart me. That one specimen is the well known narrative of *Le masque de fer*. § If

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\* Essay on the Human understanding; Book II. ch. 27. §. 8. and see Note A at the end of this little Tract.

† Natural History of Norway; Part II. ch. 8. Sect. 11. 12. 13.

‡ Ibid. Sect. 5.

§ The story is told by Voltaire, in his *siècle de Louis xiv.* vol. 2. c. 25. He describes the circumstance as *un événement qui n'a point d'exemple*; and it is as interesting and romantic in its details, as it is marvellous in its nature.

when this unknown was sent aux isles Sainte Marguerite, any considerable person had suddenly disappeared; \* if we could guess what was written by him on the plate which he flung out of the window of his tower; if he had been served with less profound respect; if he had not la figure la plus belle et la plus noble; if he had not such a passion for lace and for fine linen,—our whole pleasure would be gone. But to be continually exclaiming “who could he be?” merely in order to remind ourselves that it is impossible to tell;—and to warrant our adding, “what a mysterious business it was!” this it is, which gives us such delight. The lively interest, which I here speak of, draws the mind-strings up to a tension fitted for harmonious vibrations; and perhaps the mysticism of astrology and second sight may screw them higher still. Sir Walter Scott knows how to produce this state of nerves; and by a skilful management of their chords, can “discourse most eloquent musick.”†

The scale (shall I call it of surprise?) would admit of greater nicety of subdivision; and give a class of hybrid cases, situate between the ordi-

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\* Quand on l'envoya aux isles Sainte Marguerite, il ne disparut dans l'Europe aucun homme considerable.—Le gouverneur mettait lui-même les plats sur sa table; et s'asseyait rarement devant lui. Le Marquis de Louvois lui parla debout; &c. &c. SIECLE DE LOUIS XIV.

† HAMLET.

naries and wonderfals of life ; and not distinctly referrible to either. I have a fancy to illustrate this, by a short anecdote of myself ; and some French writer having remarked that *le vrai n'est pas toujours vraisemblable*, with this observation I introduce the tale. Many years ago, in South Wales, (at *Caerleon*, if there be such a name,\*) I was examining a tessellated pavement, and some other vestiges of ancient Rome ; which formed the principal lions of the place. As I made my way over a loose low wall, on my return, some of the stones gave way ; and something rung with a metallic sound, and rolled within my view. It turned out to be an ancient coin. I am no medallist myself ; but I shewed it to one who was ; and who pronounced it a coin of Constantine, as I recollect. I afterwards gave it to a relation ; and know not what has been its fate. It had a head on one side, and something resembling a port cullis on the other.--Had this coin dropped from the girdle of some Legionary, as he crossed this wall, (which I am determined was of Roman fabrick,) and lurking safely in its crevice, had it

seen the wild waste of all devouring years, †

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\* It occurs so me that this name must be correct, or nearly so ; for its etymology is likely to be *castra legionis*. Amongst its antiquities was a Roman brick, or tile, with *Legio II. Augusti*, or some such title stamped upon it.

† Pope's Epistle to Addison, on his work on medals.



till, after the lapse of about fifteen hundred of them, it threw itself in the way, and fell into the cabinet of E. Barton?

Such accidents, in no degree astonishing, cannot, in our graduations of surprise, claim a higher place than that of the mere *unusuals* of life. But there is, in certain phenomena which are known occasionally to occur, a marvellous sort of miracle, but which resembles the miraculous, (in its ordinary acceptation) by seeming to involve an interruption of nature's course. The eccentric course of comets, the wonderful properties of the loadstone, might not come properly within this description; and accordingly, instead of referring to them, as examples of what I mean, I will remind my reader of those anomalies, called meteoric stones; the rare and unaccountable effects of an almost utterly unknown cause. Are they a precipitate,—a tremendous sediment,—deposited in some chemical process, of which our atmosphere, or the regions beyond it, are at once the subject and the scene? Are they fragments exploded from some planetary body, we know not what? Or part of the wreck of one, which has somewhere gone to pieces in the depths of space? Or are they the condensation and solidifying (do I coin a word?) of matters which had heretofore been scattered and dissolved; but which fall together, when abandoned by the caloric that had held them in solution; and which

is itself perhaps inspissated into a vast electric flash?—We know nothing of all this. All we can say about them is, that they are the irregular consequences of some law of Nature with which we are unacquainted; (a definition which perhaps would suit with miracle itself;) and that such operations, carried on upon a larger scale, might produce a havock, which volcano or earthquake could not rival. \*

Mean time they have served to redeem Livy's credit; and to shew that the *lapidibus pluisse*, which is one of his standing prodigies, † was not only what *simplices ac religiosi homines* might have believed; ‡ but what many, without disbelieving their senses, could not doubt. I do not know whether the times in which we live be those of miracle; but they do appear to be those of refutation. Mermaids, thunderbolts, and showers of stones come forth, to turn against us the laugh, which our self-sufficiency so long levelled against them. § We now have reason to be persuaded

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\* A mass of meteoric iron was found in Peru, the weight of which was fifteen tons.

† Liv. lib. i. c. 31. et passim.

‡ See *an attempt to explain on natural principles the late cures*; the motto to which is taken from Livy. *Prodigia eo anno multa nunciata sunt; quæ quo magis credebant simplices ac religiosi homines, eo etiam plura nunciabantur.* DEC. 3. Lib 4.

§ Until 1802, the notion that solid masses of stone fell

that the Diana of Ephesus, and the Palladium, *really* fell—if not from heaven, yet from the sky. \* They probably were, or were formed out of, meteoric stones. So the *Idæa Mater*, which was transported with such ceremony to Rome, from Pessinus in Phrygia, was a stone; perhaps a shapeless one. Attalus received the Roman Embassadors, who came to fetch it, with much kindness; *sacrumque iis lapidem, quam Matrem Deum esse Incolæ dicebant, tradidit.* †

But to get back once more to ghosts and apparitions. From my having given up the two goblin damsels with so little struggle,—I mean “the spirituall creature *Madine*,” and that other phantom, to whom Dunstan gave a reception so much too warm,—is it expected that I should join the miracle exploders, in their scorn of the entire of the spectre tribe? Nay, I am not *Esprit fort* enough for this.

The well known story told by Clarendon, of the apparition of the Duke of Buckingham’s father, Sir George Villiers; the “horrible sha-

from the air, was stigmatized by philosophers, and indeed by all, as a mere vulgar error.

\* The image of Diana, at Ephesus, was believed by the Ephesians to have fallen from heaven. So was the Palladium, or sacred statue of Minerva, preserved so carefully in Troy, and afterwards removed to Rome.

† Livy, book 29. ch. 11.—The *Idæa Mater* was Cybele.

dow,"\* that appearing to Brutus, undertook to meet him at Philippi; and kept its terrific word; do not let me be required to surrender these. But this latter is said (by whom said? by Mr. Hobbes!) to have been a dream. It would be a better mode of discredit, to call it an invention. For, the subsequent defeat and death of Brutus, —was this also a mere dream? Be all this however as it may, my superstition cannot abandon tales, which make the flesh creep, and the hair stand so delightfully on end. The ludicrous, burlesque, and mean, I am ready to surrender: they bear indeed about them the stamps and badges of fabrication. But the agreeably frightful I cannot persuade myself to give up *en masse*. The stories which I have adverted to, and a few more of the same water, (or rather of the same air,)

not these; I cannot part with these. †

Nay what would the Bible Society, or Kildare-street Institution say, if I were to forget the raising of Samuel, or overlook the witch of Endor?

But I ought not, while I am trifling, to touch on sacred ground.

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\* Macbeth.

† Not that; I cannot part with that; &c.



Let me rather recall the reader's mind to a notion which has so long and so generally prevailed ; that "murder will out," by means of a mysterious control and ordering of the course of things.

It will have blood ; they say : blood will have blood.\*

To what may be considered as a proof of this, I happened on one occasion to be a witness. I was one of the audience at the trial of a man for murder. The case was this. The deceased and the accused had been tenants to the same landlord. On a certain day, the former went from his own house to pay his rent ; saying that he would call on the prisoner in his way ; and that they would go together. From that day he was missing ; and as well from what he had said when leaving home, as because he was traced to the prisoner's house, and never reached the landlord's, a suspicion arose, that he had been made away with ; and fell on him, at whose trial I was present. All search for the body had however been ineffectual ; and the surmises, which had been beginning to subside, were more completely lulled, by a letter received about this time, as from the missing man, by his friends ; in which he expostulated with them on the course which they were taking, and which was likely to frustrate and de-

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\* MACBETH.

feat his plan. That plan was, as he informed them, to abscond and go to America; where he hoped to recruit his circumstances; of the embarrassed state of which they were not ignorant. He added that he had carried his rent with him, towards defraying his expences. Some time after this, I forget upon what ground, suspicion was revived. A fresh search was made after the body; but it proved unsuccessful; and the party was returning from it, across the fields. In their way, and while near the house of the suspected, they had to leap a ditch; which one of them did accordingly; the rest standing upon it, and intending to follow. The leap was downward, from a height; and he who made it, being a heavy man, descended with some force; and stumbled as he landed. As he did so, a human arm was propelled, just beneath him, into the ditch; and seen by those who were still on the other side. The result was a finding of the body, of which they had been in quest. With a view to concealment, the surface of the ground had not been moved; but a birth made in the face of the ditch, for the reception of the corpse. The ground above this grave was not of sufficient thickness, quite to resist the shock with which the first man who crossed the ditch descended; and thus it was that the arm was forced out: and some marks, which I have forgotten, identified the body. Something more than mere suspicion being now

thoroughly awakened, and diligent inquiry proceeding, other facts transpired; and amongst them was the following. The prisoner had gone into an obscure school house in the neighbourhood, and asked for paper. There was only a small girl within, at the time of this visit; who referred him to a copy-book, as containing the only paper which she had. Out of this he took a leaf. The copy-book was forthcoming; and produced upon the trial. So was the letter which had been received by the friends of the deceased; and which exactly fitted what, in cutting out the leaf from the book, had remained behind. Perhaps what I am about to add was not the least extraordinary part of the case;—viz. that the murderer excited general sympathy and compassion. He had tendered, and pressed a plea of guilty; which it was scarcely possible to prevail on him to withdraw. As the evidence against him was proceeding, he occasionally addressed the jury, which tried to turn a deaf ear,—with “God forgive me! Gentlemen, it is all true.” Those who conducted his defence were producing a young woman as a witness. As she advanced to the table, he started with an air of terror; stretched his arm from the dock, as if to prevent her coming up; and exclaimed, horror-struck, to the judge, “Oh! my lord, do not let that unfortunate woman come upon the table. She only wants to perjure herself, to save her brother’s life.”—She was his sister.

But can I find no apologists, for that semi-belief in the supernatural and mysterious, to which I lean? From many to whom I might appeal, I will select the authority of but three.

And first I will refer to one, who, if time and place permitted, would have been a Christian: \* one who perceiving that Man stood in need of a Divine Instructor, proclaimed that accordingly, through the mercy of Heaven, he would have one; and who appears to have been condemned to death for *not* being superstitious; and for withdrawing the Youth of Athens from superstition.†

We have all heard of the Genius, whose mysterious impulse Socrates acknowledged and obeyed: whose still small voice he conceived himself internally to hear.‡ He was a wise, and a very so-

\* Though *Christianity be as old as the creation*, yet for many and many an age before our Saviour's birth, there were no Christians, but that chosen People, who were the depositaries of the prophecies of God. To shew that there were Christians before Christ, see John viii. 56.

† I mean that the evidence adduced to prove his impiety, rather proved his freedom from superstition. I do not mean that the true and ultimate cause of his death was not envy and malignity.

‡ The Genius; τὸ Δαιμόνιον. See note upon the word in the *ἀπολογία*, Sect 4. Xenoph. Memor. p. 381. The term 'impulse,' which I have used above, may be ill-chosen; for Socrates used to say that his internal monitor frequently *dissuaded*; but never *urged*.



berly wise man.\* Self-knowledge was the science on which he set the highest value : which he most cultivated, himself ; and advised others most to seek. Every thing frivolous and unsolid he put to shame and flight, with an irony the most keen and delicate and playful ; abounding in *finesse* ; but employing all its sportiveness in defence of the soundest truth.† Yet those unusual emotions of the mind, which modern theory calls indigenuous, and its mere natural and common growth ;—and this, even where they are powerful enough to cure paralysis, or restore speech,‡—*he* on the contrary considered as divine and preternatural impressions. Such was the result of *his* laboriously acquired knowledge of himself and Man : and we should do well to read over with attention those discourses, which in Xenophon's report of them have so irresistible a charm, before we stig-

\* The appellation which Aristotle applies to the understanding of Socrates, is *στάσιμον*, ingenium stabile atque firmum : steady ; sedate. Aristotle was not himself a person of a too *exalted* imagination. He assuredly was, in the words of Milton, “sober, stedfast, and demure.”—Aristot. *τεχ. ῥητορ.* κ. 16.

† His dialogue with Glaucon (Xenoph. Mem. lib. 3. c. 6.) is an exquisite specimen of his raillery. And by the way, such a quick sense of ridicule as Socrates possessed, is a protection to the possessor against superstitious credulity.

‡ See *an attempt to explain, on natural principles, the late cures.*

matize the opinions of Socrates, as quite absurd. When hard pressed by Hermogenes, for reasons why he was not preparing his defence, he at length replied ; ἀλλὰ νῆ τὸν Δία, ὦ Ἑρμόγενης, ἤδη μὲ ἐπιχειρῶντος φροντίσαι τῆς πρὸς τοὺς δικαστὰς ἀπολογίας, ἢναντιώθη τὸ Δαιμόνιον. \*

My second reference shall be to Doctor Samuel Johnson. The Author of “ An exposure of the late impostures ” describes him as “ a Christian, and a pious one ; ” † and cites him as an authority on the subject of miracles ; which of course he would not have done, if he had not considered him as a person of high intellectual endowments ; and “ a *rational* Christian,” as he signs himself.

In his life of Lord Roscommon, Doctor Johnson has given place to the following report : “ At Caen, the Lord Roscommon, being a boy of ten years old, who was wont to be sober enough, was one day as it were madly extravagant in his play ; so that those present said “ God grant this “ bode him no ill luck ! ” In the heat of his extravagance, he cries out, *my father is dead*. A fortnight after, news came from Ireland that he *was* dead.”

Such being the text, let us now hear Johnson’s

\* Xenoph. Mem. lib. 4. c. 8. s. 5. and Socratica Defensio, sect. 4.

† P. 10.

comment. “The present age is very little inclined to favour any accounts of this kind. The incident ought not however to be omitted; because *better evidence of a fact cannot easily be found, than is here offered*; and it must be by preserving such relations, that we may at last judge how much they are to be regarded. If we stay to examine this account, we shall see difficulties *on both sides*. Here is a relation of a fact given by a man who had no interest to deceive; and who could not be deceived himself: and here is, on the other hand, a miracle which produces no effect: the order of nature is interrupted, to discover not a future, but only a distant event; the knowledge of which is of no use to him to whom it is revealed.”—Yet with all this, *and it is much*, against the credit of the tale, no less a man than Johnson can not utterly disbelieve, nor will stigmatize it as a falsehood; nor even think it right to omit it, when he is giving the incidents of Lord Roscommon’s life. And mark how he proceeds. “Between these difficulties, what way shall be found? I believe what Osborne says of an appearance of sanctity, may be applied to such impulses or anticipations as this: *do not wholly slight them; because they may be true: but do not easily trust them; because they may be false.*”

This very able man would have said that “they *must* be false,” if he thought that nothing super-

natural, alleged to have occurred in modern times, was to be believed. But that he entertained a directly contrary opinion, is to be collected from another of his works; and the passage, in addition to *his* authority, gives us also those of Bacon, and of Bayle.

“ A general opinion of communicative impulses, or visionary representations, has prevailed in all ages, and all nations: particular instances have been given, with such evidence as neither *Bacon* nor *Bayle* has been able to resist. Sudden impressions, which the event has verified, have been felt by more than own or publish them. The second sight of the *Hebrides* implies only the local frequency of a power, which is no where totally unknown; and where we are unable to decide by antecedent reason, we must be content to yield to the force of testimony.” \*

Of well attested, though preternatural, appearances and impressions, might the object be,

\* Journey to the Western Islands. Johnson's Works, vol. viii. p. 345. 346.—What follows I will throw into this note. “ By pretension to second sight, no profit was ever sought, or gained. It is an involuntary affection, in which neither hope nor fear are known to have any part. Those who profess to feel it, do not boast of it as a privilege; nor are considered by others as advantageously distinguished. *They* have no temptation to feign; and *their hearers* have no motive to encourage the imposture.”—He says, he “ came away” from the highlands, “ willing to believe.”



to aid us in shuffling off, occasionally, that mortal coil, in which we are so much and so continually entangled? to awaken us from the lethargy of our gross *material* slumbers; and remind us of the generally *ἀόρατα* of the immaterial world?

Let this be as it may, my next and last apologist shall be one, of whom it has been at once affectionately and finely said, that

He taught us how to live; and oh! to high  
The price of knowledge, taught us how to die.\*

I will bestow upon my excuses the advantage of giving them in his words.

“ I think a person who is terrified with the imagination of ghosts and spectres, *much more reasonable* than one, who, contrary to the reports of all historians, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of spirits fabulous and groundless. Could not I give myself up to this *general testimony of mankind*, I should to the relations of particular persons who are now living; and whom I cannot distrust in other matters of fact. I might here add, that not only the historians, to whom we may join the poets, but likewise the philosophers of antiquity have favoured this opinion. *Lucretius* himself, though

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\* TICKELL of ADDISON.

by the course of his philosophy he was obliged to maintain that the soul did not exist separate from the body, makes no doubt of the reality of apparitions ; and that men have often appeared after their death. This I think very remarkable. He was so pressed with *the matter of fact, which he could not have the confidence to deny*, that he was forced to account for it by one of the most absurd unphilosophical notions that ever was started. He tells us that the surfaces of all bodies are perpetually flying off from their respective bodies, one after another ; and that these surfaces or thin cases, that included each other whilst they were joined in the body, like the coats of an onion, are sometimes seen entire, when they are separated from it : by which means, we often behold the shapes and shadows of persons who are either dead or absent.” \*

I lately heard, from an extremely sensible, intelligent, and well educated young gentleman, two anecdotes, which if not instructive, may at least prove entertaining ; and therefore I will set them down. One was of his mother, no longer living ; the other was of (as I recollect) a friend.

The former, at breakfast one morning, said — “ I had, in the course of the night an extraordinary sort of dream. I found myself I did not well know where ; and suddenly heard a trumpet

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\* ADDISON, SPECTATOR, No. 110.

give a very dismal sound. Immediately I seemed surrounded by a multitude of persons in deep mourning."—Some hours after, news arrived of the Princess Charlotte's death.

The other anecdote was this. Executors, searching the drawers and papers of their deceased, found a memorandum in his hand writing, to the following effect. "Monday night, December——18—. I have risen from my bed, to enter this memento of the futility of dreams. Maria (his deceased wife) has just seemed to appear to me in one; and to warn me that this day in the next year will be my last."—On that day twelvemonth he had expired.—These may both have been mere coincidences; and probably one of them at least was. But a concurrence so extraordinary seems worth recording.

I for my part, will confess myself not ill-pleased, that my lot has thrown me into a simple and retired corner, where rustic marvels are occasionally to be found; in other words, where an antique and innocently credulous superstition dwells. In the ash-park, "by the pale moon-light," my deceased grand-father continues occasionally to take his walk; and certain snow-white horses, without heads, are given to water themselves at my ponds, (they alone know how,) at very unseasonable hours. It is true that *I* have never beheld either man or horse: nay it is true that I do not believe them to have been seen by others; and that I ne-

ver have found safety by crossing a little brook, which runs briskly near the war-bush, within a few perches of my house. But in my childhood I have been often told, (and never thought of doubting,) that many thus escaped from a goblin-procession, which followed close upon their heels to the very water edge. But it is equally true that I like this sort of thing; much as I do my rookery; or the rudely dated stone, which once surmounted my hall-door; and which, though it be now removed, I have however taken reverend care to inlay elsewhere. In short, I like appurtenants, that smacking of "th' olden time," shew my dwelling to be not a place which yesterday produced; but one on the contrary, in which trees, traditions, and the marvels of rural superstition, have had time to grow.

"I love the Jews," says Gray; "they are so much better Christians than Voltaire." I am nearly tempted to say I love the superstitious, because they are better Christians than the scoffers.\* Some of those who scoff, would tremble to sit down amongst a dinner party of thirteen. Perhaps I would myself as soon *not* make one at such a meeting. But at least I am more consistent in my credulity than they are. I so not sneer at an alleged miracle, while I shudder † at a seemingly frivolous and senseless omen.

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\* Ἡπὸν φιλόσοφος ἐστίν, οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἔτως ἀσιβεῖς τοὺς λόγους διζήμι. LUCIAN.

† assuming, for argument, that I do so.



But what shall we say or think of the late extraordinary cures? I have not undertaken to determine this. I sat down merely to tell my dream: a complicated vision of *the wonderful*, which I have had; or reverie, in which the recital of those strange occurrences had plunged me.\* The fact is, that I feel “perplexed in the extreme;” and to enter on minute discussion would put me into the kind of state, in which we find Æneas, as described by Virgil.

——— *animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc,  
In partesque rapit varias; perque omnia versat.*†

\* Τῆτόν γε τὸν λόγον πολλῶν δὴ καὶ πολλάκις ἀκηκοῶς, ἀεὶ θαυμάζω. PLATO.

† Eneid. lib. VIII. *In partesque rapit varias* might perhaps admit of being rendered, ‘compels me, as I drift, to run foul of different parties.’ The circumstances of Ireland, in this respect, gave occasion to the following lines:

Orange was all the cry a week ago:  
Presto, begone! for now 'tis Hohenloe.  
“A miracle!” quoth Saintly: “nonsense! that?”  
“Pro-di-gi-ous!” retorts me simpler Pat.  
And sooth to say, that puritanic squad  
Should credit popish miracles, were odd.  
Such candour—*οἶ* (as rallying Frenchman says) *da!*  
Were a strange miracle wrought in Bethesda.—  
Oranger, Newlight, Ribbonist, oh when  
Will you be melted down to Irishmen?  
When Patrick shook our vipers off, like Paul,  
And drove them hence,—he fail'd to banish all:

An attempt to explain these cures, on principles merely natural, has appeared in print. It manifestly is the work of a gentleman, and a clever man; is written with elegance, liberality, good feeling and good taste; \* and the author must be what its title page has styled him, a physician. Perhaps it may be because I am *not* one, that I do not feel prepared to subscribe to all his doctrines. I will not cavil at the collation of “an onion” with “a tender recollection;”† and might even pardon the lachrymal Naiad, though she were obliged to yield to the ascendant pun-

Hid from the lightning glances of his mind,  
 The virulence of Party lurk'd behind;  
 And the grand miracle of our day were in  
 Casting at length *Erinnys* out of *Erin*.

\* I am not certain that I should not wish the observation from Selden, in page 8, away; viz. that “when priests come into a family, they work upon the women.” I doubt its being quite in harmony with the statement in page 4, of the author’s “sincere belief, that in the cases of Miss Lalor and Mrs. Stuart, there was neither delusion on the part of the patient, nor dishonesty on the part of the priest.’ It looks at least as if there was some fluctuation in the author’s notions. But the pamphlet is clearly the *hasty* production of a superior man. How much more open to animadversion must this, which I am writing, be,—where none of the superiority, and all the haste, is to be found!

† Page 6.

gency of the ci-devant Egyptian God.\* Nor will I stop to question whether the coarse drops, which he provokes, be of the number of those tears,

Whose limpid sources pure  
Deep in the gentle bosom lie:  
Trickling thro' mazy course obscure,  
From melting heart to twinkling eye. †

Be these matters as they may, it seems from this ingenious little tract, that Lady Macbeth's physician was but a novice, when he acknowledged himself unable to 'minister to a mind diseased;' and where "she was troubled with thick-coming fancies," declared the malady "beyond his practice;" and was for leaving his "patient to minister to herself." It appears that by moral influence and agency, he might not only have operated successfully on the mind,—but have administered his remedies to the body, through the soul. In short he was a bungler; and it was not "physick," but physician, that Macbeth would have been warranted in "throwing to the dogs." I used to think the mental volatile, which was snuffed up by Orlando, with such signal benefit to his understanding, was rather a novelty in the

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\* Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens  
Ægyptus portenta colat?

Porum et cepe nefas violare ac frangere morsu.

O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis

Numina!

JUVENAL. SAT. XV.

† ANON.

affairs of medicine ; and if I recollect rightly, his friend Astolfo brought the phial from the moon.\* But to send mental emissaries to the lungs and liver, seems to be carrying the spiritual mode of treatment farther still.

If I sent any nuncio to the liver, it should be that notorious and practised errand-runner, Mercury ; who, if he killed in the case of Argus,† we know can also sometimes cure. But whom to call in for Le Poumon,‡ I cannot imagine. For the heart indeed, Hope is thought to have a powerful balm ; the apt moment for applying which, should not be suffered to escape : for *deferred*, it *maketh the heart sick*. § But when the organ has become “flaccid,” || that moment is gone by. Nay, even before it is shrivelled by affliction, it will perhaps have become shrunk by mere experience ; neither penetrable to the insinuations, nor capable of being dilated by the cordial influences of

\* Orlando Furioso, Canto 39. st. 57.—“ Take physick, Pomp,” says Lear, in a passage of exquisite beauty and pathos ; nor is the language that of insanity. But I take it to be that of *figure*.

† Of this homicide he was proud. So at least it would appear from his title of *Argicida*.

‡ The very throne of Malady, according to the theories of *Doctor Toinette*. See *Le Malade Imaginaire*.

§ As I have learned from Proverbs ; and (alas !) also from Experience.

|| Page 7.



cheerful expectation. Or to adopt the figure which an anonymous versifier has preferred ;

To distant heights tho' soaring Hope aspire,  
 And in bright visions Fancy tempt Desire,  
 Of Hope, Experience checks the wandering flight ;  
 And hues of Fancy fade in Reason's light.  
 Dipp'd in the splendours of declining day  
 As evening clouds a radiant skirt display,  
 Whose crimson'd lustres, kindling into gold,  
 Fix'd in mute gaze th' enthusiast poet hold ;  
 Glows lovely from afar the glad array ;  
 But reach'd, alas ! to vapour melts away :  
 Thus objects oft, by glittering Fancy dress'd,  
 Blaze while remote ; are vapour when possess'd.

But I have made a long digression to the heart. Our business was with the head : to which accordingly I now return.

I will not dwell upon the principle of cure, which puts a brain upon hard duty, that was overworked already ; and strongly suspect that such would not be this writer's *practice*. But how it could be right to keep the cerebral vessels swoln by strong excitement,—and not be wrong to open the temporal artery or neighbouring veins ;—how repletion and depletion can both be remedies for the same disease ;—this is what I feel it more than difficult to conceive. The depletory plan is indeed that which I should prefer. If I were to find

The Patient's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,

I should fear that the momentum of a faculty, whose active influence such an expression would announce, might be more likely to produce, than to cure a determination of blood to the head :

Such tricks hath strong imagination.

I am assuming that Mrs. Stuart's complaint was " of an apopleptic tendency." Doctor Mills certifies it to have been so ; and Doctor Cheyne seems to adopt the statement, of her " having laboured under determination of blood to the head."

But let us pass from her case, to the perhaps more striking one of Miss Lalor ; " restored to the perfect use of speech ; of which for six years and five months, she had been totally deprived."\*

That " the nervous system is impressible, either by physical or by moral agency," †—that it is liable to be acted on, not only by matter but by spirit, and by whatever may belong to spirit,—this is a position, which requires no proof. It is by means of this nervous system, that the soul can so pervade and animate the body, as, blended

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\* Doctor Doyle's address, dated Carlow June 22d, 1823 ; and quoted in the first page of the " Attempt." Doctor Doyle's address had said " miraculously restored." I omit the word '*miraculously*;' and in what remains of the R. C. Bishop's statement, the Author of the " Attempt" concurs. see pages 1 and 4.

† *Attempt* ; p. 6.

with it, to compose the living man. It is only in *degree*, that my opinion differs from that of the author of the "attempt." I think his theory carries the efficacy of this spiritual ascendant much too far. We can only know the extent of this influence by experience; and experience will scarcely supply examples, to warrant or support his system.

Now let us observe the consequence. So far as miracle is but a demonstration of the omnipotence of God, it is what Reason, instead of being revolted by, concurs with Piety in admitting. It is therefore not to our reason, but to our experience, that miracles are repugnant. Our reason they merely *pass*: it is our experience that they *contradict*. Thus, though a better navigator than *The Exposer*, the Author of the "attempt" may be also said *incidere in Scyllam*; when he would substitute for a miracle which is contradictory to experience, a degree of spiritual agency on the nervous system, which equally contradicts it. If he considered the case as one of imposture or delusion, his objections would stand on firmer grounds of logick; whatever might be their foundation in point of fact. But he has taken no such grounds. He on the contrary distinctly states his belief, that there was neither delusion on the part of the patient, nor dishonesty on that of the priest. "That the cure of Miss Lalor was effected, he very firmly

believes ; and that it was wrought by the influence of Prince Hohenloe he does not entertain a doubt." \* And how does he account for so astonishing a cure ? By a combination of circumstances calculated to exalt her imagination ; which accordingly did so ; and, in doing so, went the very unusual length of enabling the dumb to speak. This seems to me to be—not to dispute the miracle ; but to conjecture how it was performed : viz. by conferring upon soul a degree of ascendant over body, infinitely exceeding that, which, according to the ordinary laws of nature, it appears to us, from our experience, to enjoy.

Suppose the case had occurred in Judea, near eighteen hundred years ago : that this dumb patient had touched the hem of our Lord's garment as he passed ; and had immediately been conscious that her infirmity was removed. Might we not be reminded of the circumstances in which she stood ? that it was the case of one, who " hopeless of relief from all human means, " *threw herself on the divine mercy ; and came " with an undoubting faith, into the very presence of her God ?*" † and that this rush of enthusiastically pious feeling, breaking suddenly through the organic impediments which had caused her silence, found vent, and issued audibly in praise and prayer ?—What is this, but to

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\* Page 4.

† An Attempt &c. page 9,



declare that *it was her faith, which made her whole?* the very language, addressed by our Redeemer, to her whose bleeding had been staunched, *and the miraculous character of whose cure is not denied?*

When I first heard of Miss Lalor's case, my memory reverted to one, which Herodotus records. When, in the storming of Sardes, a Persian soldier was on the point of slaying Cræsus, with whose person he was unacquainted, the previously dumb son of this defeated monarch, who happened to be near him, ἔρρηξε φωνήν: εἶπε δὲ “Ὁ θρωπε, μὴ κτεῖνε Κροῖσον.”\* To say that this was not a *miraculous* recovery of speech might be to go too far; and would at all events be a *petitio principii*, on the part of such as said so. Those who hold it beneath the dignity of Heaven, to interpose in favour of “a country girl,”† or “a hypochondriacal nun,”‡ might *permit* the Divine Mercy to interfere, on behalf of a monarch; and

\* Herodot. Clio. c. 85.

† It would appear from the historian, that the youth had been dumb *a nativitate*. He seems so to describe him at the commencement of chapter 85; and when, in the next chapter, he records his exclamation to the Persian soldier, he adds, οὗτος μὲν δὴ τῷτο ΠΡΩΤΟΝ ἐφθέγγετο.—Now if all this be so, his first utterance of articulate sounds, in a language which he had never learned, (nor probably heard; for it is likely he was *sourd et muet*;) must have been a preternatural event.

‡ Exposure, &c. p. 4.

§ Attempt, &c. p. 10.

a monarch too, whose fortunes were closely connected with those of his conqueror, Cyrus. It cannot be necessary for me to observe, that this latter was a most extraordinary and destined person : on whom depended the termination of the captivity of “the chosen seed :” one, of whom prophecy is full : whom Isaiah had apostrophized *by his name*, more than a century and a half before his birth ;\* and with respect to whom, the Scripture might not have been fulfilled, if Cræsus had been allowed to fall, when his capital was stormed. Again, I do not know that we have any authority for the fact of his son’s recovery of speech, but that which the father of profane history supplies. Now if we take Herodotus’s account, we perhaps ought to take it altogether ; and a part of it is, that the Pythoness had foretold this resoration of his faculty of speech.

αὐθήσει γὰρ ἐν ἡματι πρῶτον ἀνόλβω.†

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\* Isaiah xlv. 1. 2, 3, 4.—Isaiah prophesied from 735 to 681 years before Christ. Cyrus flourished about 536 years A. C. The prophecy in chapter xlv. was delivered 712 years A. C. In uttering the above thrilling passage, the prophet seems to have had a distinct and perfect view of the facts and person who were yet in the womb of time ; *and to have known exactly what he was predicting.* Verses 5. 6. 7, &c. are astonishingly sublime. Compare v. 7. “ I create evil ;” with what I have said in a former page, of the existence of evil.

† Clio, c. 85.

As to the predictive powers of the Delphic priestess, it is not my business to assert them here. If the historian invented the prediction, he may have also fabricated the fulfilment ; and thus the anecdote of the Lydian prince will be no authority against me. But in assuming the Pythoness to have had mad glimpses of futurity, I should not touch the essentials of my Christian faith ; but might leave her to settle this matter with the sorcerers of Pharaoh.\*

As to the sneer, in the “ exposure of the late impostures,”† at the notion of divine interposition, in favour of “ a country girl, in an obscure farm house in the Queen’s county,”—I had yet to learn that God was a Respector of persons ; or withheld his favours from those, who wanted the recommendations of worldly rank. To an objection which occurs to me, and is perhaps of greater weight, I will admit that in St. Luke a passage is to be found, ‡ which those might offer in reply, who believe the late cures to have been of a miraculous description. Still, the *cui bono*? of these cures continues to stick with me ; as a question and a difficulty, not satisfactorily solved. And I doubt whether this, which I am about to add, may not be found to be a wholesome, without being an irreverent or presumptuous rule : viz.

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\* Exodus, vii. 11, 12. † Page 4.

‡ Ch. iv. vv. 25. 26. 27.

that any event of the times in which we live, which makes pretensions to being a deviation from the course of nature, and to bear a miraculous impression of the immediate hand of God, should carry with it a train of circumstances and facts, which will furnish a convincing answer to this question of *cui bono*; and justify our giving credit to what excites and warrants strong suspicion, by contradicting our experience, and deserting and violating the course and laws, of that to which I will give the name of *ordinary nature*. Is this an unfair test? It is one which the miracles of our Saviour, (even such as I would least attempt to comment on or explain,) and those of the prophets and apostles, will be found to stand.

But if it should be held (as it may, piously, consistently, and in a spirit of pure and perfect charity, be maintained,) by well informed Divines of the Roman Catholic persuasion, that my *cui bono*? admits of being answered; and that the *good* and important object of these miracles was this:—to proclaim the superior sanctity of their religion; and recall us from our supposed errors, to the bosom of the true Church;—still it strikes me, that from the Mercy of Heaven we might reverently expect, that it would make its signs and wonders irresistibly apparent, *to those for whose conversion they were meant*; in-somuch that if we denied them, we should incur the scriptural rebuke, of having it said, “ eyes



have they ; but they see not.”—This would not be a case, in which “ Moses and the Prophets” might suffice us. On them might safely rest the truth of that religion, which Protestants and Roman Catholicks both equally profess ; but the points of difference between us would still form a question, on which we know that sober, learned, and pious minds may disagree ; and the *sign* that should indicate to us the true fold, and bring the entire Christian flock within it, we might perhaps without presumption, expect to be a striking one. Would not Catholicks require this, if a miracle were alleged on our side ; and if the object which we assigned for it, was *their* conversion to the established faith ?

But of the late cures I appear to myself to have said enough. On the one hand, against a suspension of the uniform course and laws of nature, I feel that there is a presumption on which I have a right to dwell ; and to doubt whether Divine Interposition has occurred ; unless a *dignus vindice nodus* can be distinctly shown. On the other hand, when I meet a narrative of cures performed, in a way quite foreign from the ordinary and experienced course of things ; when this narrative comes authenticated by the solemn sanctions of an oath, and “ the signature of professional men of “ the most unexceptionable character ;” \* when

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\* An attempt to explain the cures alleged to be miraculous, p. 2.

two respectable and high Dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church bear testimony to its truth ; and avow their deliberate impression, that the cases involved “interference supernatural and Divine ;” \* when I find an able man, while he disputes the miracles, declare his perfect belief that the cures have been performed ; his conviction that they were wrought by the influence of Prince Hohenloe ; his persuasion that on the part of the priest there was no dishonesty, nor on that of the patients any delusion ;—when his explanation leaves the event still unaccountable to me ; and merely substitutes a profane miracle in place of what has been called a sacred one ; when all which I have here collected is thus offered to me, to throw into the scale opposed to that of my incredulity and doubt ;—can I positively deny that there is something to be canvassed ? Can I do better than adopt a formula of the tribunals of ancient Rome,—and return *non liquet*, as my timid and wavering judgment on the case ?

Some Protestants appear to me to have imbibed a notion, that antipathy to miracle is a part of their religious duty ; and even essentially characteristic of their faith. Protestantism, these will tell you, is the religion of right reason.

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\* Doctor Murray’s Pastoral Letter. To “the high respectability of this reverend person,” the Author of the Attempt, &c. bears testimony in page 2.

But I will tell them in reply,—that upon the sense in which this position shall be taken, will depend not only whether it be true; but also whether it would be praise. If what is meant be to allege—that our creed rejects every thing which our reason cannot grasp, I would stigmatize the assertion, as both scandalous and false; and selecting three from numerous proofs, which might be easily adduced, would refer to the Apostles' creed, the fourth supplication of the litany, and twenty-eighth of our thirty-nine articles, as substantiating my charge; and containing a statement of seven miracles at the least.\*

There is a sense, in which true Religion must be—and another, in which it is impossible that it should be—that of Reason. When a creed is tendered to our acceptance, we are to weigh in the scale of Reason the evidences of its truth: † but if these prevail, we receive it, thronged though it be with wonders, which surpass our comprehension; and which may be said to set our reason quite at nought.

Even that Real Presence, on which the Church of Rome insists, suggests to the reformed Church

\* Without reckoning the Creation to be one; and also without including the general resurrection.

† It is true we imbibe our notions of religion in our childhood; but equally true that we can examine its foundations when adult.

a question, not of reason ; but of scriptural interpretation and construction. Protestants reject Transubstantiation ; not because it is miraculous, but because they do not conceive the doctrine to be warranted by Holy Writ. If miracle alone were an obstacle to belief, the twenty-eighth would not be found amongst the articles of our religion. Nor is the difference between Protestant and Catholic mystery so strong,—the distinction so apparent, between “ a body’s being eaten after an heavenly and spiritual manner,” \* and being partaken of in some other miraculous way,—as that we need deny the couplets of Queen Elizabeth to have been as rational, as we must acknowledge them to have been devout. *How*, according to our articles, is it, that the body of our Lord is eaten after this spiritual manner ? “ The mean, whereby it is eaten and received, is *Faith*.” † Is not this to say that Faith operates and effects the mysterious and spiritual change ? The assertion which the article involves, appears to be twofold : that the body is eaten in the Lord’s supper ; ‡ and that it is so eaten by means of faith. Is not this to say that it is “ received and eaten” in a way which passes reason ? and is not that miraculous, which passes reason in such

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\* Article xxviii. † Ibid.

‡ after an heavenly and spiritual manner.



a way?—And it is withal a miracle, (if mystery and miracle be the same) not recorded in Holy Writ, merely as having taken place in ages past; but one occurring, and continually recurring, in the present times. For surely it is to be hoped, that as often as this sacrament is administered, many devout communicants receive the elements with that *faith*, by the secret means of which, the body and blood of Christ are eaten and drunk in the communion, after an heavenly and spiritual manner, *as our articles assert*.

Thus, *means* as well as *end*,—*cause producing* and *effect produced*,—and again, the very *manner* and peculiar character of the effect or thing produced,—are each and every of them, wonderful in the extreme. It is not an organ of the body, but a devout emotion of the soul, that converts to nourishment the sacred elements which we receive. That nutrition is not of our bodies; but of our spiritual part. Our *immaterial* feeds on, and derives life (that genuine vitality, by which man becomes a living soul,)\* from *material* substance, the work (proximately) of man's hands; and the hunger which this satisfies, and the strength which it bestows, are not like itself corporeal; but of a purely spiritual and celestial kind.

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\* Genesis, ii. 7.

Does or does not this “pass all human understanding?”

I would ask of the Archbishop of Dublin, who is considered to be an eminent divine, whether in the doctrine of *sacrifice and atonement*, an inconceivable mystery be not involved; one neither in its types, nor their accomplishment, comprehensible by man. On this doctrine he has written;\* and it is by protestants, as well as catholics, received. In this doctrine, I thank God, I very firmly believe; and found all my hopes of salvation on its truth. But this is not because I distinctly understand it; or perceive how the suffering of the innocent atones for the offences of the guilty. Passages of the gospels may enable me to penetrate the mystery more deeply:† but I only advance from one miracle to another; and of course cannot explain an *ignotum*, by an *ignotum æque*. My weary reason therefore, detecting its own weakness, reposes, not only willingly but gladly, on my Faith. It was by reasoning against the word of God, that Adam fell. In compassion to our infirmities,—or on some other grounds of infinite wisdom, unknown to me—our Creator, in place of that obedience which man failed to render, has but asked of us a faith,

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\* See his Grace's work on Atonement and Sacrifice; and, with respect to types, his Illustrations, No. V.

† John xiv. 20. xv. 4. xvii. 11. 21. 22. 23.

which our reason fully justifies;\* and against which nothing but the perverse impiety of pride can stand. Thus as a disobedience, almost coeval with our being,

brought death into the world, and all our woe;  
with loss of Eden;

the duty of faith, with which that of former allegiance has been replaced, will again

restore us; and regain the blissful seat.

On this rock, by the grace of God, I build my hopes; and the more intellect He has given to any of his creatures, the more blasphemous must it be, in dust so quickened and endowed, to refuse the devoted homage of its Reason, before Him, to whom we are indebted for life, reason, hope, and all!—But it is not Reason, that struggles against the offering of this homage; which, so far as the mere Understanding is concerned, is a willing, as it is a perfectly rational bowing down. It is Pride that is reluctant and stiff-necked. *Reason dictates and persuades to a prostration of itself.* It feels, and teaches, and impresses on our conscience, that it is due.—On faith, I repeat it, we should build our hopes. But though *per se* our works can avail nothing;

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\* For Reason continually warrants our believing what we cannot comprehend.

we should as much labour to do good ones, and to eschew the evil, as if salvation were a recompense which man's deserts could earn. Faith is indeed the root : but good works are its natural and appropriate fruits ; and in possessing these, (though in that imperfection which taints all that is but human,) we shall best assure ourselves, that we have within us the living principle from which they spring. Yet I trust that here even the barren tree is not accursed ; but that where works are wholly wanting, as they sometimes are, or lamentably deficient, as they must always be, the love and penitence, which Faith generates, will be accepted in their stead.

I have wandered : but I cannot repent of the thoughts which led me from my subject.

If an occurrence be related, which, while it transgresses the ordinary laws of nature, derives no credit from connexion with the fundamentals of our faith, we reject and disbelieve the narrative of such a fact ; founding our rational disbelief on its violation of those laws, of which experience has demonstrated the existence and operation.

But let an event equally or more miraculous, but connected with the principles of religion, be submitted to our consideration, and we shall have a course, though equally rational, yet widely different, to pursue. This occurrence (we shall say) might be incredible, if it stood alone. But we cannot insulate it in this way. What we thus re-



jected, might turn out to be a corner stone. And we have, in short, to argue thus. In the wonder which we are called upon to believe, is involved the truth of that religion which we have embraced. If this miracle be false, that religion may not be true. But the evidence vouching that religion we examined with due caution; and *our Reason* rests perfectly satisfied of its divine origin and undoubted truth. Therefore as we cannot dispute the miracle, without stigmatizing as false or dubious, that religion which our Reason deliberately pronounces to be true,—*accessorium sequitur suum principale*; and it is *Reason* which enjoins us to *believe*, although we do not *understand*. Intellect surrenders us to Faith; having first ascertained her title to our implicit confidence and allegiance.

In fact, when it has maturely weighed the evidence of a proposed religion, Reason may be said to have performed its part: and if the result of this scrutiny has been an adoption of the creed, the Rational Principle would act inconsistently, (which, while it continues rational, it cannot do,) if it were to pronounce that Truth becomes mere Falsehood, when it passeth human understanding. Nay, as I have said elsewhere, our Reason cannot fail to detect the fallacy of this conclusion: for it cannot but have long since learned, that there is much which it is impossible for us to doubt; and equally impossible that we should comprehend.

*Credo, quia impossibile est*, which has been called Tertullian's rule of faith, is, as a general one, absurd, monstrous, and almost profane. It perversely declines to use the gift of God. It deposes that Faculty which He has established in the mind of Man, as a judge of probability, and a guide to truth. It most preposterously makes that which ought to cause discredit, on the contrary induce belief. But when instead of being the rule, it becomes the rare exception; when its application is restricted to those few cases to which it may be properly applied; and lastly, when allowance has been made, for some overlatitude of expression in laying the maxim down;—it may be found to be more paradoxical than it is untrue. *Impossibile* must be translated *impossible to Man*; and suggest the idea of something transcending human comprehension. And now let us see if there be no case, to which, with the sanction of our Reason, this rule might be applied. Let us see whether the utter incomprehensibility, the humanly-speaking-impossibility of a matter, may not be an argument for its credibility; a voucher of its truth. The justice and mercy administered by Man will be found more or less to conflict; and to the attainment of the one, we must generally sacrifice a portion of the other. Can we doubt that it is not so with God? Shall we deny that this Supreme and Perfect Being unites justice without

blemish, to mercy without bounds? Must we not feel that by abridging *either*,—by conceiving one to stint, and impose checks upon the other,—we should be adulterating the pure idea of Divine Perfection? And does not the *impossibility* of finding an absolutely just-mercy, a completely merciful-justice upon earth, *form an ingredient of that proof*, which persuades us that with Divinity, this sublime and harmonious union is to be found? This union is intimately connected with our redemption; and when we reflect piously and deeply, will assist to prove the verity of the Christian faith. We shall feel that in the dispensations of God towards his creatures, the fulness of justice, and that of mercy must (because of His perfection) be reconciled. But can Man suggest what shall operate to reconcile them? *Reason* tells him that he cannot. By the sacrifice of our Redeemer they are however reconciled. Can we tell how? No: if we had faculties for this, we could have devised those means of reconciliation, which it was quite beyond the reach of human intellect to conceive. Thus the scheme of our redemption attracts credit, and deserves it, on this amongst other grounds, that it is impossible it should be understood. If we could, by any faculties which we possess, trace between salvation and the death of Christ, a perceptible relation of effect and cause; if we could contemplate the entire outline of our fall and our redemption;

“loss of Eden,” and restoration to that “blissful seat;”—would that which shrunk to limits that human intellect could span, lose no portion of its title to be held Divine? Does not Reason whisper, *credo, quia impossibile est* as things stand? That would not be Infinite, which Finite circumscribed: that would not be Divine, which *I* could comprehend. God is incomprehensible; and what touches Divinity must partake of the incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature. If Human Faculties could expound a plan which claims to be Divine; to embrace the whole of Time, and overflow into Eternity; to have had its commencement before the foundations of the World, and for its consummation to await the period when Heaven and Earth shall be no more;—the grounds of our belief in the Truth and Divinity of the plan would pass away; and in removing one incomprehensibility, we should have substituted another;—how Less could exceed More;—Finite envelope Infinite; and the Deep of Eternity be fathomed by the line of Time.

On the brink of Eternity it may not be amiss that I should stop. I have no desire to launch on that interminable Ocean; and would rather linger yet a while “upon this bank and shoal of Time.”—But whence then has the wandering reverie proceeded, which gliding on insensibly from thought to thought, has thus led me to the verge of an abyss so overwhelming? In rural quiet and



retirement it had its secret source.\* In those country scenes and classic pages, that leisure and repose, which Horace so much longed for; and which I so much enjoy.† You know, or guess, how my hours saunter their placid privacy away. You can, looking in with the mind's eye on your absent friend,

See me, (while emerald Earth to sapphire Heaven  
Looks with a tender smile, and offers flowers,)  
Alone with Rural Nature: groups of trees  
Lift high their airy symmetries around;  
Tall Ash, crow-tenanted; and stately Elm;  
Fair Æsculus, with pyramids of snow;  
And Beech, that scatters wide its glossy shade:  
Loved Trees! that o'er my boyhood shook their boughs;  
And now embosom deep my sheltered Home.  
Here nought obstructed in my musing mood,  
Beneath a canopy of verdure laid,  
Whose foliage mingles every tint of green,  
From thought to reverie I gently glide,  
And pore upon the brook, that warbling by,  
Soothes with its melodies the tranquil scene;  
While a soft leafy whisper, rustling nigh,  
Not mars the silence; but its echo seems;  
And bleat, and tinkle, heard at intervals,  
The low of kine, the Rook's monotony,  
Serve but, with voice of rural lullaby,  
To mark—and hush,—the calm, that sleeps between.‡

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\* Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books. THOMSON:

† *O rus, quando te aspiciam! quandoque licebit,  
In veterum scriptis, &c.*

‡ ANON: Æsculus the Horse Chestnut, with its snowy  
Spike of blossoms. Tinkle, from the sheep bells.

## NOTE A.

(See bottom of Page 57.)

MR. LOCKE, in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*, has related an anecdote concerning a Parrot, of which, however incredible it may appear to some, he seems to have had so much evidence, as at least to have believed it himself.\* The story is this: During the government of Prince Maurice in Brasil, he had heard of an old Parrot that was much celebrated for answering like a rational creature many of the common questions that were put to it. It was at a great distance; but so much had been said about it, that his curiosity was roused, and he directed it to be sent for. When it was introduced into the room where the Prince was sitting in company with several Dutchmen, it immediately exclaimed, in the Brazilian language, "what a company of white men are here!" They asked it, "who was that man?" (pointing to the Prince;) the Parrot answered, "Some general or other." When the attendants carried it up to him, he asked it, through the medium of an interpreter, (for he was ignorant of its language,) "From whence do you come?" The Parrot answered, "From Marignan." The Prince asked, "To whom do you belong?" It answered, "To a Portuguese." He asked again, "What do you do there?" It answered, "I look after chickens." The prince, laughing, exclaimed, "You look after chickens!" The parrot in answer said, "Yes, I; and I know well enough how to do it;" clucking at the same time, in imitation of the noise made by the hen to call together her young.

This account came directly from the Prince to the above author: he said, that though the Parrot spoke in a language

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\* It is taken from a writer of some celebrity; the author of *Memoirs of what passed in Christendom, from 1672 to 1679.*

he did not understand, yet he could not be deceived, for he had in the room both a Dutchman who spoke Brazilian, and a Brazilian who spoke Dutch: that he asked them separately and privately, and both agreed very exactly in giving him the Parrot's discourse. If the story is devoid of foundation, the Prince must have been deceived, for there is not the least doubt that he believed it.

*Bingley's Animal Biography.*

In supposing that it cannot ever, nor in any degree, link an idea with a word, I suspect that we underrate the powers of even an ordinary Parrot. It certainly knows its name: which is in other words to say, that to a certain sound it attaches the idea of itself. In showing that it can thus connect *one* word with *one* idea, do we not prove that it can connect *another* sound with *another* idea? Is any rational ground of distinction between the cases to be found? Or can it, without absurdity, be maintained, that while he can annex an idea to a sound, if uttered by another, he cannot do so, if it be articulated by himself? Probably the Parrot's powers of combination are inconsiderable and slow; nor are his ideas likely to be numerous or distinct; and proportioned to these defects will be his inability to make a long, idea-freighted, and coherent speech. But *est quodam prodire tenus; si non datur ultra.*—I was once acquainted with a Cockatoo; who, without being a prodigy, was a very clever (as he certainly was a very amiable) creature of his kind. He never said “*good-by,*” when his friend was entering, nor “*how d’you do?*” when he was leaving the room; and when weary of your company, was not unlikely to hint his feeling by a “*good-by.*” He never said “*I can’t get out,*” when he was at liberty; and seldom omitted to say it, when impatient of restraint. My feathered friend, I must confess, was *un peu Aristocrate*; and had learned to address the *Tiers Etat* with “*get out you ragged fellows.*” On one occasion he stole a march; and got into a scrape, as truants are apt to do. He had made his way to a

field of ripe corn ; and in the intricacies of this (to him) strange labyrinth, was very soon bewildered ;

and found no end, in endless mazes lost.

His situation resembled that, in which, in Brobdingnag, Gulliver had once been : but his course was different from that which Gulliver pursued. He began to shout—if not manfully, at least parrotfully,—“ *I can't get out.*” Attracted and guided by the sounds, a labouring man came up, and proceeded to extricate Cockatoo. He was at first repulsed with the usual “ *get out you ragged fellow!*”—but in the end his services were accepted or endured ; and our hero reconducted to his friends. On his return, he was lavish of his salutations and self-caresses. It was nothing but “ *how d'you do? How d'you do? Poor, pretty Cockatoo!*” In short the poor bird seemed delighted with the meeting ; and conscious that it followed on a somewhat perilous separation.—I forget was it *Catullus* who addressed a poem to a Parrot. Be this as it may, without meaning to disparage the *Psittacus* of ancient times, I will venture to say that my friend Cockatoo deserved such a compliment as well ; and that (bating the knowledge of Greek and Latin,) he was in no way inferior to—for any thing we know—his forefather.

THE END.





